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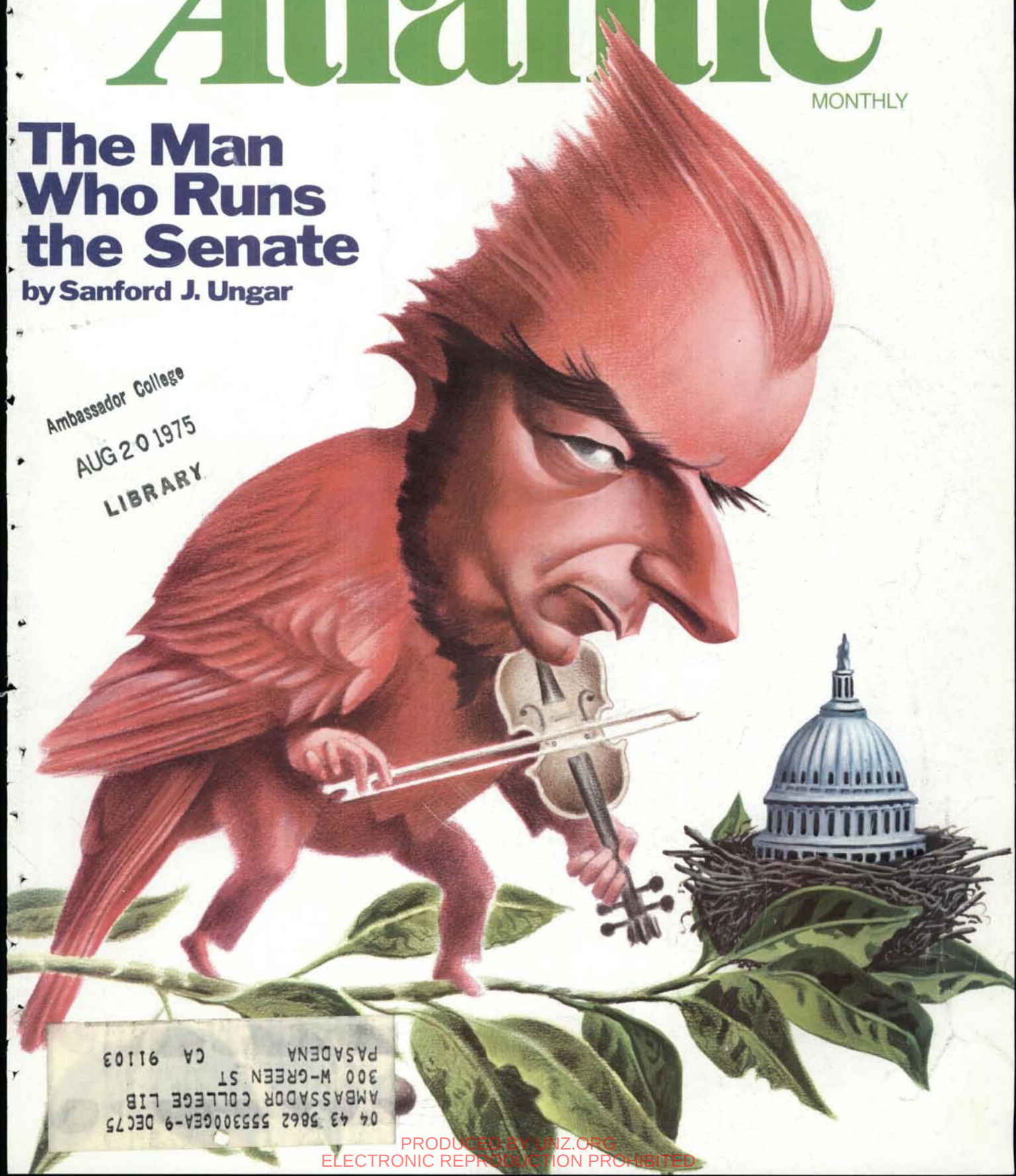
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by Sanford J. Ungar

Ambassador College

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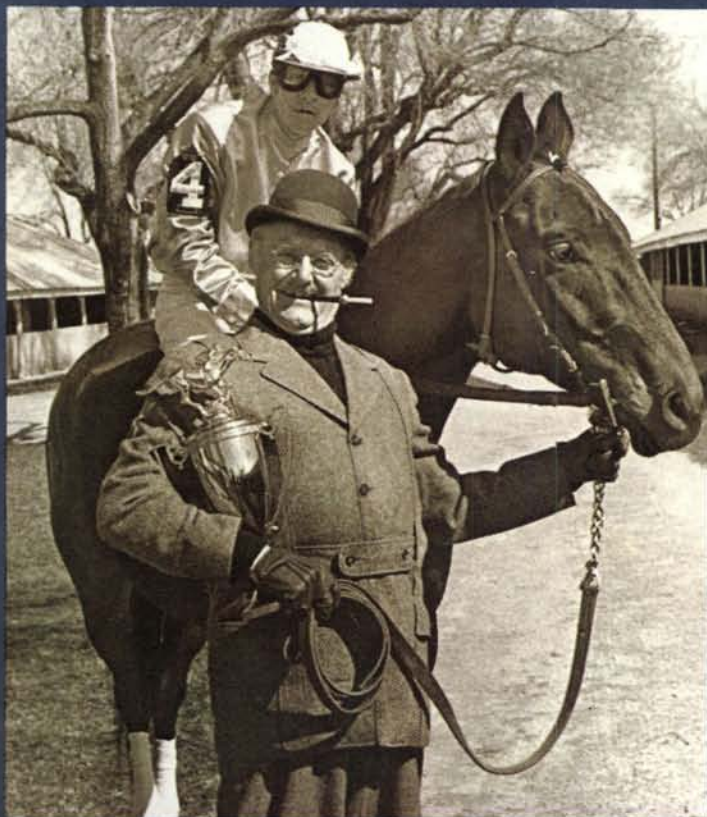
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- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|
| SANFORD J. UNGAR | 29 | The Man Who Runs the Senate
<i>West Virginia's Bobby Byrd fiddles with power</i> |
| ROBERT LIPSYTE | 48 | Pride of the Tiger
<i>In memory of a fighter</i> |
| SONNY KLEINFELD | 62 | Dwarfs
<i>The smallest minority</i> |
| ROSS TERRILL | 68 | Peking: Heart of Asia
<i>A city untouched by the West</i> |

FICTION

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| MARY MANNING | 39 | Where There's a Well . . . |
| LESLIE EPSTEIN | 53 | The Review |

POETRY

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|--|
| PETER COOLEY | 36 | Composition |
| CELIA GILBERT | 36 | Room 635, Wing B |
| MARK LEE | 37 | Jimmy Bignell's Sonnet |
| PAT LAMORTE | 37 | Millionaire |
| MARILYN THOMPSON | 38 | Poem for the Left and Right Hands |
| FELICIA LAMPORT | 47 | Cosa Nostradamus |
| WILLIAM MATTHEWS | 61 | Moving Again |
| MICHAEL DENNIS BROWNE | 66 | In Switzerland |

REPORTS & COMMENT

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| STANLEY MEISLER | 4 | Cuba |
| JULES WITCOVER | 12 | Campaigning: Eugene McCarthy |

LIFE & LETTERS

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|---|
| G. FRANCO ROMAGNOLI | 79 | Memories of a Crazy Maionese Maker |
| MARY PINKHAM | 81 | A Fan's Note |
| RICHARD TODD | 83 | Escaping False Categories |
| PHOEBE ADAMS | 85 | Short Reviews: Books |

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| L. E. SISSMAN | 16 | Innocent Bystander |
| | 24 | The Mail |

REPORTS & COMMENT

CUBA

As another American and I walked down La Rampa, a street in Havana, three little schoolgirls dressed in blue uniforms called out to us. "*Tovarich*," they said, using the Russian word for "comrade."

I approached one of the Cuban girls, a dark-skinned child of about ten. "Do you think we are Russian?" I asked her in Spanish. She nodded, grinning, her eyes shining in good fun.

"But we're not Russian," I told her. "We're Americans." The grin vanished. Her head pulled back. She frowned and tightened her eyes in fright. She was sorry that she had ever called out "*to-varich*."

It is not a pleasant feeling to frighten a child, but it is a feeling that an American ought to experience, or at least understand, before trying to analyze Cuba and the future of its relations with the United States.

Opening up

Relations will probably get better. Fidel Castro has sent out clear signals that he wants some kind of accommodation. In fact, I was in Cuba only because the Cubans need new channels for those signals. I was one of almost thirty journalists permitted to accompany Senator George McGovern on his trip to Cuba in May and one of five permitted to stay on afterward. Castro tried to impress us as much as he tried to impress McGovern. And he shrewdly singled out Barbara Walters for more attention than most. Castro has a new message of reconciliation and goodwill to send to the United States, and he knows how to do it.

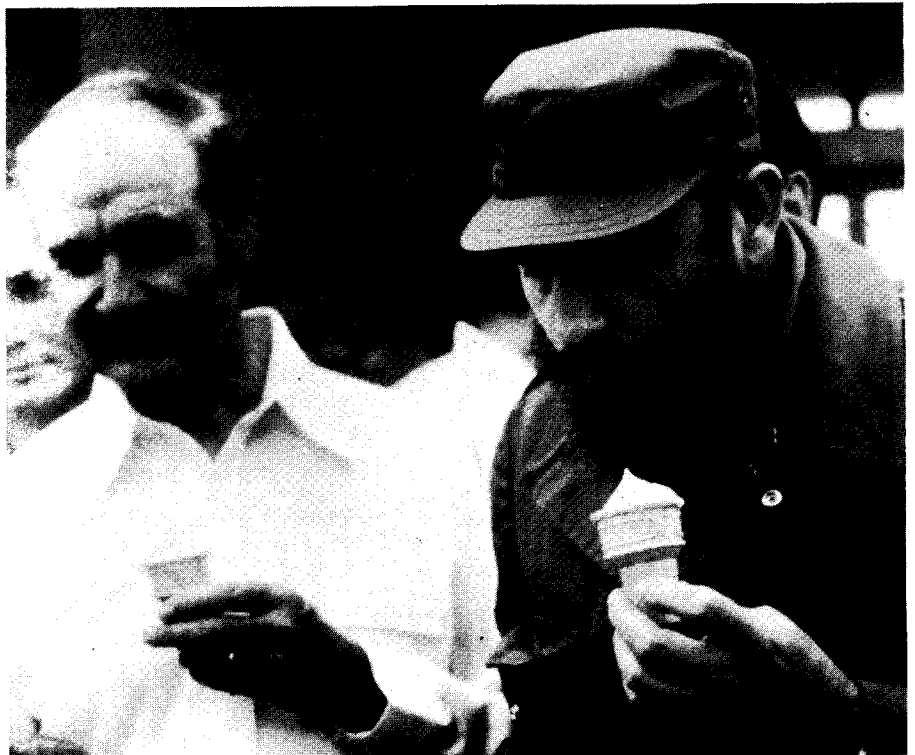
The official U.S. responses have been grudging and lukewarm, but nevertheless somewhat positive. Once the Organization of American States lifts its economic boycott of Cuba, the United States will probably lift part of its own. Some talks will begin. But the task of reaching any kind of settlement will be delicate and complex.

The United States is the enemy in Cuba. The Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, which is known as the Battle of Giron Beach in Cuba, is looked on as an attack not by Cuban exiles but by Yankee imperialists. The government's official tourist map of Cuba describes Giron Beach as the site of "the first defeat of imperialism in America."

In primary schools, there are scenes

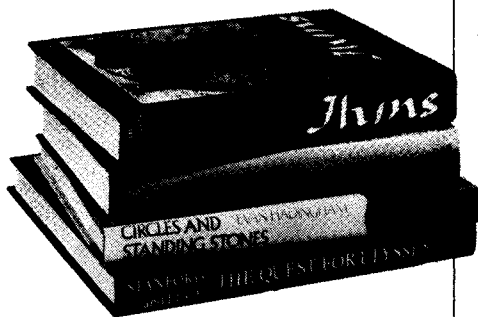
from the Battle of Giron on bulletin boards and on notebook covers. Pupils study it in a small textbook devoted solely to the battle. Sugarcane workers who have won awards for their productivity receive T-shirts imprinted with the slogan "Victory of Giron." Folksingers sing stirring songs about the battle. In one of the few instances of personal glorification of Castro in Havana, a tank stands in front of the Museum of the Revolution with a placard identifying it as "the Soviet SAV-100 tank that Fidel personally used to sink the freighter *Houston* at Giron."

In speech after speech for fourteen years, Castro has used the Bay of Pigs invasion and the U.S. trade embargo that followed it to solidify the Cuban



Senator George McGovern with Fidel Castro in Cuba, May, 1975.

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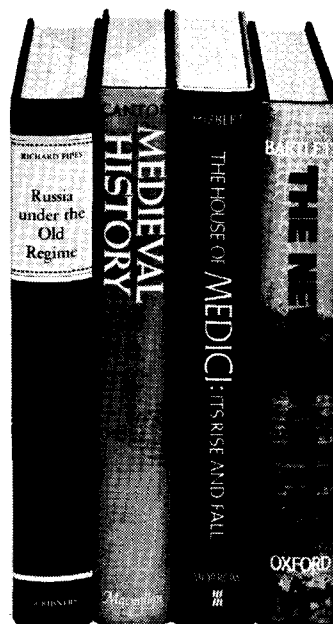
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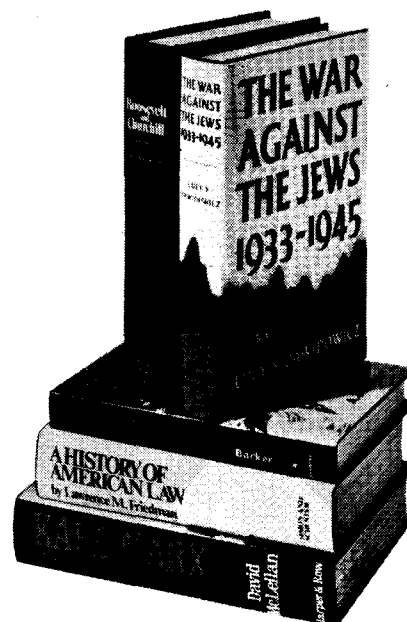
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CUBA

people behind him and to rationalize some of the hard economic times.

In view of this, it would be foolish to assume that Castro is desperately eager for fast friendship with the United States.

Why then is Castro sending out so many signals for some kind of accommodation? The answer has two contradictory sides. The extraordinary economic failures of his revolution have created many needs. The extraordinary political and social success of his revolution has generated confidence enough to enable him to look toward his old enemy for help in satisfying some of those needs. Castro may also want to lessen his dependence on the Soviet Union.

Off the streets

I had not been to Havana since 1960, more than a year after Castro overthrew Fulgencio Batista and many months before Castro, out of either conviction or spite, turned Cuba communist. Now the ubiquitous shoeshine boys are gone. And so are the hustling petty traders on the street corners and the garish Coca-Cola signs all over. I noticed this first, and then I noticed the drabness.

On the surface, at least, Havana, once the great metropolis of the Caribbean, is now a colorless city; it is as if some of its vitality has been drained. Yet this impression must be assessed with great care.

Other tropical cities, such as Accra and Lagos in Africa, or Port-au-Prince and Kingston in the Caribbean, have color and frenzy and vitality because of the people living outside the good life of their societies: underemployed traders with a few pens or a few pounds of rice hustle through the streets of these cities, hawk their wares, laugh at customers, and bargain with them. Urchins prowl outside hotels to shine shoes or beg for a few coins. Idle young men laugh and joke and fight on street corners.

Though poor, Havana has almost none of this street life now. On the narrow streets of the magnificent Old Quarter, only old folks idle, sitting on stoops and sidewalks by the stately, baroque buildings, reading the newsless Cuban newspapers or some propaganda magazine from Poland, chatting softly with each other, basking in the glaring

sun and salt air. The shoeshine boys are in school. The idle young men are at work.

Fidel Castro's communism has abolished the street hawkers and made them employees of the state in shops or offices. The color of the city is gone, but those who made that color are probably better off now.

Of course, communism has done more than remove the shoeshine boys and petty hawkers and idle unemployed from the streets. The government has also taken over all other private enterprise. The results can be depressing to anyone used to the bounty of the shops in Western Europe or the United States, or even Mexico.

The government has kept the names of the old stores, like Floger's department store, and Woolworth's, but they are different now. On the Saturday before Mother's Day, Floger's had little to sell. Some counters were empty. Others had only a few pairs of East German ladies' hose, or a few pairs of shoes, including ugly, rubbery plastic ones made in Cuba. The ladies' department had a single rack of blouses, all pink, all of the same model. The men's department had three kinds of shirts. There were long lines downstairs at the counters selling trinkets and cosmetics for Mother's Day presents.

Woolworth's looked about the same as Floger's. Unlike most variety stores in the world, this one does not have a problem of fitting all its goods on its counters. One section of a counter, for example, had only three packets of pins sold on ration.

Cuba has a complex rationing system. Some basic items are rationed in a specific way. Everyone, for example, may buy twelve ounces of meat every nine days, six pounds of rice every month, six pounds of coffee every month, and a bar and a half of soap every month. These staples are carefully noted in the family ration book. Other items are rationed in a more general way. For example, Cubans have coupons that can be used to buy anything in a general category such as kitchen utensils or sewing supplies.

Some items are rationed and not rationed at the same time. Everyone is entitled to two packs of cigarettes a week at a cost of 24 cents a pack for strong cigarettes and 30 cents for mild. A Cuban, however, can buy more than his ration if he pays \$1.93 a pack for strong cigarettes and \$2.90 for mild. Cheap cigars are rationed in this way,

but the high-quality brands are reserved for export—Cuba needs the foreign exchange. Bread is rationed at one quarter of a pound per person per day; but after 5 P.M., anyone can buy whatever is left at the bakery. Numerous other items, such as shampoo, plastic shoes, cookies, salt, and eggs, are off the ration system.

No frills

The government has tried to keep the prices of basic foods down to their 1960 level. Beef costs 66 cents a pound, eggs 84 cents a dozen, bread 18 cents a pound loaf, sugar 8 cents a pound, shirts \$5.40 to \$6, and trousers \$14.40 to \$18. On the other hand, a television set costs \$785, and the privilege of buying one goes to selected workers who have performed well at their jobs.

Despite the lack of variety in the stores, the Cubans have managed a variety of dress. Cuba is not China. The men wear different kinds of shirts: open-necked *guayaberas*, denims, polo shirts, T-shirts, dress shirts. Some women wear slacks, some wear miniskirts so short that they would defy the prudishness of most communist societies. Some wear their dresses just above the knee.

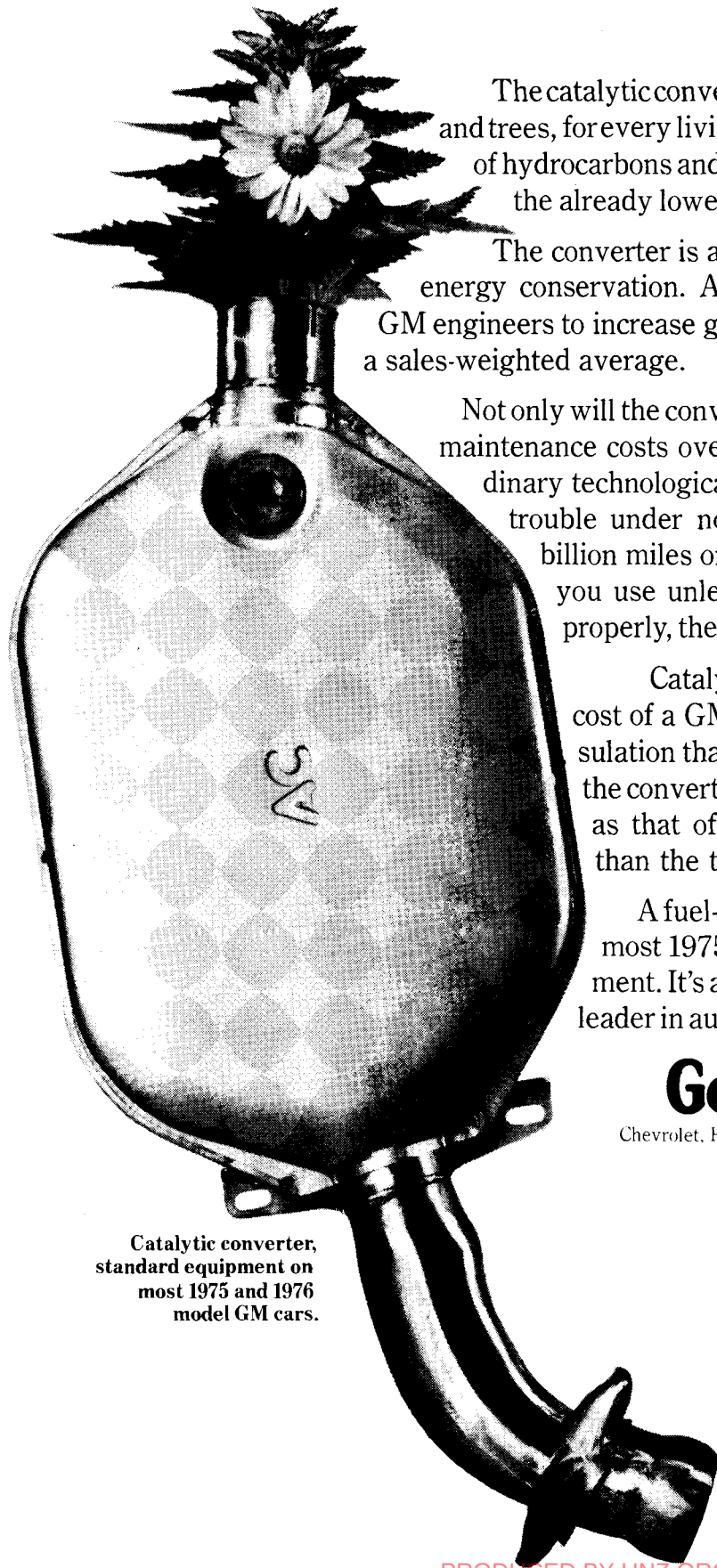
There is, however, a uniformity of quality. Everyone is dressed in practical cloth without frills or patches. A visitor rarely sees a man in a suit in Havana. He also rarely sees a man in tatters. Glamour has been taken out of dress. The men do not sport flashy cuff links. The women do not wear false eyelashes.

Much of a Cuban's day is spent waiting. People wait for taxis, for buses, for newspapers, for ice cream, for cakes, for restaurants, for movies, for picture postcards.

The waiting is due in part to the shortage of goods, in part to the shortage of services. In ten days of crisscrossing Havana, for example, I noticed only two newspaper kiosks. Restaurants often keep people waiting not because of a shortage of tables but because of a shortage of waiters. Cuba does not have enough labor, perhaps because so many Cubans have emigrated to the United States.

Surprisingly, there is almost no overt grumbling. People wait a half-hour for a bus and then pack into a stifling mass of humanity without the slightest mutter or sigh. I noticed a hint of a complaint only once. A man left the long line out-

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CUBA

side a movie theater on a Sunday afternoon, approached the ticket seller, shrugged, and held the palms of his hands out, as if to ask, "When are you going to let us in?" But he did not say anything.

Of course, Castro's Cuba is hardly a society that encourages dissent. But this alone does not explain why people do not mutter about waiting in line. Some foreigners who live in Cuba say that the people accept inconveniences because they know that everyone shares them. "Don't misunderstand," says a Western diplomat. "The Cubans are not annoyed by waiting and rationing. They see this as an equitable sharing of what there is." Perhaps Fidel and the other party leaders do not wait in line for buses. But nearly everyone else does.

Cuba, unlike almost every other country of the developing world, does not have an ostentatiously wealthy class. The highest-paid members of society—doctors, actors and actresses, top party leaders—earn around \$725 a month. A university professor earns \$530 a month. An elementary school teacher earns be-

tween \$180 and \$205 a month. A steel worker averages \$183 a month.

Even the salaries do not tell the full story. Health care, education, electricity, and public telephones are free. No one pays taxes. No one pays more than 10 percent of his salary for rent. All this tends to lessen the difference between the richest and poorest in a society.

Some people have more privileges than others. It is not clear to an outsider how this is determined, but some Cubans qualify for better housing than others, or win the right to buy a new car. Productive workers earn special privileges, such as half-price rates at the Tropicana nightclub for one evening. Nevertheless, Cuba, again unlike most countries of the Third World, does not have an obvious class of governmental elite who frequent the expensive restaurants, drive around in long Mercedes-Benz limousines, and vacation in Paris.

Hangovers

There are some vestiges of bourgeois days. Baseball is still the national sport, though admission is free and billboards sell the Communist party instead of shaving cream and beer. The oddest left-

over from the past is the old Tropicana nightclub, once a haven for American tourists and rich Cubans.

The government still maintains the club for official foreign visitors led there by their government guides, for workers who have been rewarded for their productivity, and for any other Cuban who wants to spend at least \$15 for an evening's entertainment and a few drinks.

The show can best be described as 1950s Miami Beach. There are large bands, rising stages, sliding scenery, spouting fountains, garishly colored lights, gaudy costumes, low humor, belting singers, and prancing chorus girls with long legs and wiggling behinds. Sipping a daiquiri or a rum mojito and taking all this in, a visitor may feel for a moment that Cuba simply cannot be communist, that, at heart, Cuba has not changed. But he would be wrong. Cuba has changed. Cuba is communist.

Cuban officials are anxious to show off the changes. Visitors are led to schools, housing projects, a mental hospital, a steel factory, dairy farms. The results in education are probably the most impressive. In 1959, Cuba had a million illiterates, and only 56 percent of its six- to twelve-year-olds were in school. Now, according to Minister of Education José Ramon Fernandez, there is no illiteracy, and almost every child is in school. University enrollment has increased from 16,000 in 1957 to 69,000 this year.

In 1959, Cuba had 6000 doctors, one for every thousand people. Now the total is 10,000, but because of population growth, the ratio is only a little better than it was sixteen years ago. "We had trouble," says Vice Minister of Health Pedro Azcuy, "because of the large numbers who left the country." Many doctors joined the middle-class exodus from communism. But there are 5000 students now in medical school, and Dr. Azcuy says that by 1980 there should be one doctor for every 750 Cubans.

Sugar daddy

It is hard for officials to show off the economy. There are too many shortages, too many missed goals, too many failures. Cuba, in fact, is still what it always was, a Caribbean island dependent on a single crop—sugar. Cuba's sugar policy is erratic, with officials trying to diversify the economy while hoping to increase sugar production as well. There have been a couple of record



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years, but for the most part, sugar production has stayed at its pre-revolutionary levels.

A Russian subsidy of about \$2 million a day keeps the Cuban economy going. Russia supplies all of Cuba's oil. Since 1960, according to Castro, Soviet tankers have brought 80 million tons of oil to Cuba. The Soviet Union buys most of the sugar crop.

There are some obvious reasons for Cuba's economic troubles. The U.S. trade embargo has hurt, for most Cuban machinery, including that of the sugar mills, came from America before the revolution. Cuba has been unable to obtain adequate spare parts. Another dislocation was caused by the exodus of the middle class. Since the revolution, 452,100 Cuban refugees—most of them managers, shopkeepers, professionals—have fled to the United States. That is an enormous number of skilled people from a country that had a population of only six million in 1959 and has a population of nine million now. Their departure, of course, has eased the transformation of Cuba from a bourgeois society dependent on American capitalism to that of a communist society held up by the Soviet Union. But it was still a great price to pay.

Many American analysts put even more blame on the romantic attempts by Fidel Castro to manage a complex economy through personal charisma, rhetoric, and energy. The sugar fiasco of 1970 is the main evidence. In that year, Castro put his prestige behind a campaign to cut 10 million tons of sugarcane. He rushed across the countryside exhorting all Cubans to join the harvest. It was as if he were back in the old days, leading an attack against Batista's forces.

Although Cuba did produce more sugar that year than ever before or since, the harvest was 1.5 million tons short of its goal. Perhaps more important, the economy was disrupted because of the numbers of Cubans who left their regular work to cut cane. Milk and steel production dropped heavily. Fidel himself proclaimed that his campaign was a failure.

Since then, in the view of most analysts, Castro has put economic planning in the hands of President Osvaldo Dorticos and Vice Prime Minister Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, two men whom the Russians trust as planners. There appears now to be a growing institutionalization of the Cuban government. Instead of Fidel rushing about like an

emperor making decisions on the spot, analysts believe, decisions are now made by technicians and planners, advised by Russian experts. Perhaps this accounts for the steady though slow recovery of the economy since the most depressed days of a few years ago. The rise in the price of sugar, however, was probably more significant.

Castro's Cuba

The evident institutionalization of Cuba may reflect only a change of style, not a weakening of Castro's power. Cuba is run by the political bureau of the Communist party, headed by First Secretary Fidel Castro, and by a government of ministers, led by Prime Minister Fidel Castro. These institutions are not open for inspection by visiting American newsmen or scholars. Therefore, analyzing the extent of Castro's power within them is no more than a guessing game.

A visitor soon finds himself feeling that modern Cuba is Castro's Cuba, no matter what the analysts say, no matter what may take place in the Politburo and the Cabinet. Cubans pridefully ask what you think of him. They quote him to you, not in a phony way, but as if his words had affected them. When he shows up, they are not surprised or awed. They tug at his sleeves and joke with him.

In one village he visited, a woman complained about the water pressure in her apartment. He waved his cigar at her. "Here you have free electricity, a television set, and pay no rent," he said, "and you complain about that." She laughed.

The most telling sign of Castro's popularity is the absence of much overt glorification of himself. Unlike the late Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, or Jomo Kenyatta's Kenya, Fidel Castro's Cuba does not overflow with monuments to him, with photographs of him, with coins bearing his likeness.

Schools do have placards with quotations by Fidel. In the little village of Nuevo Jibacoa, there was a newspaper photo of him on the wall of the apartment into which a woman invited Castro, Senator McGovern, and the journalists. But I do not remember seeing a single photograph of him in a government office or a shop. There are no monuments to Fidel in Havana. Unlike Nkrumah or Kenyatta, he obviously does not need anyone to create a feigned popularity for him.



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CUBA

In their meetings with the forty-
eight-year-old Castro. American news-
men found a man of good humor, intel-
ligence, and confidence, with a sensitive
understanding of the politics and cus-
toms of the United States. His under-
standing was so good, in fact, that at
times it was mocking. Asked about al-
leged attempts by the CIA to assassi-
nate him, Castro could not keep from
twitting American reporters, who he
knew were glowing with self-con-
gratulation over the role of the press in
Watergate. "But this [the CIA role in
assassinations] is not news for us," he
said. "Perhaps it is news in the United
States. I know you have very good jour-
nalists in the United States, but they
were not so good in this case."

Castro, in fact, has developed the ex-
traordinary skill of charming visiting
Americans and visiting Russians with
equal ease. During the McGovern visit,
Castro presented himself as a man
without rancor against the American
people, a man of quiet sincerity and
reasonableness who wants an easing of
relations with the United States.

Speaking awkwardly in English for
American television, he said, "We wish
for the people of the United States wish
of understanding, wish of friendship. I
understand it is not easy because we
belong to two different worlds. But we
are neighbors and, in one way or an-
other, we ought to live in peace, United
States and Cuba."

Yet, a few hours after McGovern left
Cuba, Castro addressed a rally celebrat-
ing the thirtieth anniversary of the Rus-
sian triumph over fascism, what Ameri-
cans call V-E Day, the end of World
War II in Europe. In booming tones
and oratorical cadence, Castro said
what a visiting Russian delegation had
come to hear. He denounced Yankee
imperialism and thanked the Russians
for supporting Cuba against it. He drew
a parallel between Yankee imperialism
in Vietnam and Nazi imperialism in
Europe. Without the Russian victory
against Nazi Germany, Castro said,
Cuba could not have stood up to the
Yankees. "When the Soviets fought and
died in Leningrad, in Moscow, in Sta-
lingrad, in Kursk, in Berlin," he said,
"they were also fighting and dying for
us."

It would be wrong to think of Cas-
tro's rhetoric as only performance.
Though he wants some reconciliation

with the United States, he is obviously
grateful to the Russians for their help.
Without it, he might not have been able
to withstand the American trade em-
bargo and the CIA harassment. To
show his indebtedness, he made the
kind of speech the Russians wanted to
hear.

Walking softly

There are a good many clichés about
the role of the Soviet Union in Cuba.
Democratic Congressman Dante Fascell
of Florida has said, "The Cuban people
today are slaves of the Soviets." The
State Department talks about "the sub-
jugation of Cuba by the Russians." There
is no doubt that the Soviet Union
is enormously influential in Cuba. Yet a
visitor is struck by how unobtrusive the
Russian presence seems.

There are believed to be at least six
thousand Russians in Cuba, half mili-
tary advisers, half technicians and eco-
nomic planners. There is no doubt that
they are there. A visitor can overhear
women chattering in Russian on the
buses. Kiosks sell Russian newspapers
for them. Russians can be spotted in
hotel lobbies and on beaches.

However, the Russians in Cuba tread
softly, even though there is evidence of
their influence and aid. The fact is that
the ships in Havana harbor are almost
all Russian. Bookshops sell books
printed only in Cuba or in the Soviet
Union. The newspapers brim with arti-
cles about Russian history and life. The
philatelic bureau of the Cuban post of-
fice sells Russian stamps. Movie houses
show more movies from Russia than
from any other country.

Nevertheless, there have been trou-
bled relations between the two
countries. In 1968, Castro dismissed and
jailed thirty-five Cuban officials who
were believed to have close ties with
the Soviet Union. The Soviets retaliated
by holding back oil deliveries. Castro
kept the offenders in jail but gen-
uinely affected to the Russians by proclaiming
his friendship. In August, 1968, he be-
came one of the few prominent Com-
munists in the world to support the
Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.
Russian influence has probably in-
creased since the failure of the sugar
campaign of 1970. A Cuban-Soviet
commission of collaboration was
created in the wake of the debacle,
evidently as a means for the Russians
to take some part in economic plan-
ning.

From 1960 to 1972, according to Department of State estimates, the Soviet Union provided \$6 billion worth of aid to Cuba, three quarters in economic aid, the rest military. The aid now runs at about \$750 million a year. A good deal of the aid has come in the form of credits for the purchase of Russian goods. In 1972, American government estimates showed that Cuba owed the Soviet Union \$2 billion. But Cuba does not even have to begin paying this back until 1986. In the light of worldwide inflation, the delay amounts to a large Russian gift.

When sugar prices were low, the Russians bought most of Cuba's production at a price higher than that on the world market. Now that the market price is high, the Russians are letting the Cubans sell as much as they can on the world market before shipping the committed supply to the Soviet Union. These favorable terms may be offset somewhat by the price Russia charges for oil. That price is not known. In any case, the Soviet Union now accounts for about 60 percent of all Cuban trade, about the same percentage that the United States provided in the Batista days.

This heavy dependence on the Soviet Union may be a considerable influence on Castro's decision to look toward the United States. Contradictory though it seems, it is possible that the Soviet Union is encouraging him, partly as a new twist on the U.S.-Soviet connection, partly to enhance the Soviet Union's standing in the rest of Latin America, and partly to reduce the Soviet economic burden.

Castro has insisted that negotiations cannot begin until the United States lifts, at least in part, its economic embargo. Even with that done, there would certainly be three other obvious issues in any round of talks. The Cubans would probably demand that the United States give up its naval base in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. The Americans would demand that Cuba pay some compensation for the American companies and property that were seized by the Cuban government after the revolution. Private American claims, certified by the U.S. government, come to \$1.8 billion. The United States will ask interest payments that will swell the demand to \$3.4 billion. In turn, the Cubans will likely ask for more than that as compensation for the damages incurred as a result of the U.S. trade embargo.

Negotiators can probably work all this out, but there will still be other significant though unstated issues. On both sides, there are policy-makers who, though they may sense the inevitability of accommodation, look on it with some foreboding.

Exporting revolution

An isolated Cuba, no longer a pariah, in full communication with the rest of the world, could be more effective in the long run than the old isolated Cuba in trying to export revolution.

Cuba has solved some of the terrible problems that now gnaw at most of the Third World: high unemployment, the misery of life in the streets, the incredible and ever-growing gap between rich and poor. Cuba's success could have a powerful appeal to intellectuals, potential leaders, and even leaders of the Third World who now become enraged at the failure and frustration in their own countries.

Cuba has paid a price for its success: a dictatorial system that permits no dissent, a lack of consumer goods, and a dependence on the Soviet Union. To the average American, the price is not right. But it all looks rather different to many people in the Third World, for their own governments are far from democratic, their own people share very little in the consumer goods that go to the select few close to power, and the economies of a large number of these countries are heavily dependent upon the West.

Castro is not likely to work out any agreement with the United States that will again open Cuba to American goods. A full flow of American ideas and products into Cuba might undermine the Cuban system to some extent. Nor will Castro want any agreement that deprives him entirely of his American scapegoat. The immediate prospect, then, is for slow though inevitable movement toward a limited accommodation between the United States and Cuba.

There is little that American policy-makers can do to alter Castro's conditions for re-establishing communication with the United States. Cuba will open up its lines to the rest of Latin America and the Third World with or without an American accommodation. Such an accommodation would only bless Cuba's overtures.

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CAMPAIGNING

Eugene McCarthy

In many ways, it's the same Gene McCarthy we've always known who's out around the country now, working to build an independent candidacy for the presidency next year. He stands on the stage of a dark Gothic auditorium at the University of Chicago, and it seems exactly the right setting for him, the mystic of American politics. A deep red velvet curtain hangs high behind a raised lectern that is more a pulpit, and as he preaches from it, bright sunlight streams through a sculptured window and catches his ascetic profile. His hair is grayer and he is a bit heavier than in 1968, but the aloofness, the self-containment, the untouchableness of the man remain unchanged, his most distinguishing characteristics.

Like some cardinal of the medieval church, who has come to have his ring kissed and to administer absolution to the errant, he explains his challenge to the two-party system to several hundred college students who listen respectfully to the figure of history before them.

"Papal succession"

"I don't know when it ever became a system," he says with that air of tolerance others reserve for children. He reminds his audience that the parties are not mentioned in the Constitution, that the Founding Fathers, in creating the Electoral College, envisaged the selection of a President by a gathering of wise men beholden not to any party structure but to their own best judgment. He points out the irrationality of blind party loyalty, whereby Democrats who supported Lyndon Johnson on Vietnam immediately turned around and opposed his successor, Richard Nixon, who pursued essentially the same policy.

"You can see where this has become part of the national inheritance," he tells the students. "It's like papal succession." And he cites the inability of Republicans, knowing that the office of the presidency had been demeaned and compromised by Nixon, to oppose him actively until the very end. Finally, he notes the public clamor for an alternative to the two major parties, as reflected in the public opinion polls, the rise in the independent vote, and the severe drop in all voting. All these he

sees as indications that the two-party system is ripe for taking, or at least for shaking, by someone who can call up the better nature of the country, as he himself did in 1968.

"You make a judgment whether the test ought to be made," he told the boys at Shattuck Academy in Faribault, Minnesota, at a later stop, "and if you're there, you do it." It was the kind of observation that one running more on principle than on any determination to succeed might have made. But McCarthy is campaigning and organizing full-time—and enduring the considerable psychological discomfort of not being taken seriously. He has quit a part-time teaching job in New York and is funding his effort with the proceeds of lectures, for which he charges \$1000. He is living in Washington with his son and trying to finish a book on contemporary America; he's a kind of homegrown, latterday Tocqueville, whom he quotes repeatedly.

Word Person

Beyond the solitary nature of his current undertaking, the major difference between 1968 and now is, of course, that McCarthy doesn't have the issue of a war with which to build a political force. Still, at Oakton Community College outside Chicago, he told a group that pressed him on the point, "I hope there will be a response. I don't think it will be the emotional thing it was in '68. You can't protest against inflation the way you can against a war."

In his speeches, mostly on college campuses, McCarthy relies on other issues he raised in 1968, employing the same professorial style, flavored with an undiminished cutting wit, that made him the candidate of the erudite and the politically irreverent seven years ago. He reminds his audiences of his 1968 warnings against excessive personification of the presidency, now adding to his familiar jibes at Johnson references to Nixon's ornately costumed palace guard. In 1968, he said that he would tear down the fence around the White House and let people get closer to the presidency; now he says he would plow under the Rose Garden and plant squash and cabbage to keep the office in reasonable perspective. He asked one audience of students whether they could picture a White House press release that read, "The President came out into the cabbage patch and made a heroic statement."

He calls unequivocally for resumption of the war on poverty and a shortened work week to spread jobs and cut unemployment. He promises a foreign policy that reflects rather than undermines American idealism. He has some new issues as well, such as the lack of responsibility in the automobile industry and the need to hold it to account: "You could have had the right wheel of every Chevrolet fall off and they would have said, 'It's a bad year,' like a blight of bad apples. . . . If Karl Marx had known about the automobile, he would have written another chapter saying, 'Capitalism needs either war or the automobile.'"

And as befits an independent candidate, McCarthy twits Republican Gerald Ford and Democrat Henry Jackson alike—sparing the liberals who might be expected to cut into his own vote. He recalls Ford's observation that "truth is the glue of the American government," then notes that the President comes from Grand Rapids, the furniture capital of America. "You read a man's metaphor," he says, "and you know something about what he is."

He says that Ford recalled Paul Revere's historic warning as "One if by day, two if by night," and suggests that Jackson would have said, "One if by land, two if by sea; one and two is three. They're also coming by air and we'd better be ready for them." And on military preparedness and the defense budget, he speculates: "If we told Henry Jackson we have no blowguns and poison darts, he'd say, 'We'd better



Eugene McCarthy

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get some. We're underprepared . . . He'd put in a bill saying we ought to have parity with Brazil. After all, the Panama Canal is narrow."

McCarthy remains, above all, a word person, amused by what others do with words, and even more so by what he does with them. The Nixon "team's" equating the Vietnam war with a football game particularly entertains him. He says former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird dealt with the ineffectiveness of the South Vietnamese troops by explaining, "We look upon them as an expansion team." And he applauds Nixon's use of "incursion" to describe his invasion of Cambodia because, "You can't make a verb out of it. You can say to them, 'Stop invading,' but you can't say, 'Stop incursing.'"

As in 1968, one often gets the impression that McCarthy is talking to edify himself as much as anyone else. At Oakton College, a sudden heavy rain began to pelt the tin roof over his head, making it impossible for his audience to follow what he was saying. "It's all right," he said when somebody suggested he wait for the rain to stop, "I can hear."

Slipping

Not everyone who hears him is as impressed as people were in 1968. To some younger students, who remember him vaguely or have read about his challenge to Johnson, he is more a curio, a political museum piece to be seen when he comes to town. John Thorbeck, a twenty-three-year-old graduate of Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, told me: "He's lost his issue and that takes away much of his dynamism. He's older. He's professorial now. I don't think he's a real viable candidate."

But if McCarthy has lost something, he seems to have gained a measure of forbearance that was often lacking in 1968. Traveling alone and unheralded, he puts in long days marred by inconveniences and what he would surely have treated as intrusions seven years ago. No student group seems too small these days to warrant a long interview. He spends much time in open-ended discussion with anybody who encounters him. He is reaching out for disciples one by one, with only the barest staff and some local volunteers, and he has to sell himself all over again. It's not that he enjoys the grilling he faces, but he puts up with it with at least a



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a lot of
suffering.**

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CAMPAIGNING

show of cordiality, and that in itself is a change.

Driving back from Oakton late at night, he sat hunched and tired in the front seat of a Volkswagen and restrained-ly responded to a string of questions from a Northwestern University student who was considering active support but wanted assurances on where McCarthy stood. As the questions were posed, the answers came more testily, but they came, until the student was taken to his residence in Evanston. Only then was McCarthy driven to his downtown Chicago hotel. In one sense the episode was a measure of how far McCarthy has slipped politically. In another sense, it seemed to say something about how committed he is to what he's trying to do—a question always raised by his old backers who want to believe again but feel that they were burned by him in 1968.

This time McCarthy is looking past the presidential primaries that were his undoing seven years ago at the hands of the brash Bobby Kennedy, past the major party conventions, to the general election campaign. While Democrats and Republicans alike destroy each other in the primaries and at their conventions, he predicts, he will be inexorably building another liberal army at the grass roots, at least 5000 strong. The objective is to win ballot position for McCarthy-committed electors in all fifty states in what he says will prove to be at least a four-candidate race—the Democrat, the Republican, George Wallace, and himself. The result, he acknowledges, will probably be a deadlock, with no one candidate receiving a majority of the electoral votes. The Constitution requires under such circumstances that the election go to the House of Representatives, with the next President presumably chosen by a straight major-party vote. What good will that do McCarthy, the fallen-away Democrat, the independent?

"You could negotiate a settlement in the Electoral College so it wouldn't have to go to the House," McCarthy says. "If we had electors in the Electoral College, we might have a voice."

In any such negotiation, he himself would not seem the likely beneficiary, so alienated is he now from regular Democrats. However, as a counter to Wallace and an alternative to him, the choice of McCarthy would not be in-

conceivable. And at a minimum, Gene McCarthy would again be charting unknown political waters, confirming his place in history as an innovative maverick, marching to his own drummer. He does not share the fears of others, as expressed in a question from a University of Chicago student, that a multi-candidate field would turn the election process over to the Congress. "They couldn't do worse than the people did the last time," McCarthy responded. "Congress has only elected the President twice, and they picked Thomas Jefferson and one of the Adamses. That wasn't too bad."

Aardvark Party

So it's not surprising now to find McCarthy out in the country doing his own thing. Those who dismiss him as a kind of Democratic Harold Stassen do not begin to gauge the man's perspective on history. What can a politician who has helped dump an incumbent President do for an encore? Well, how about creating an enduring third party, seizing upon the national mood of disenchantment with the established parties?

Characteristically, McCarthy doesn't talk of any new party, preferring to refer to a new "movement" that shuns party structure, in keeping with the original constitutional concept. But ironically, the new campaign finance law against which he has filed suit (in concert with Conservative Senator James L. Buckley of New York, a delicious McCarthy touch) could provide the financial base for development of such a party, looking past 1976 toward 1980.

The law provides that any independent candidate who receives 5 percent or more of the total popular vote is entitled to federal reimbursement of campaign debts, at a rate based on his vote, from the same income tax checkoff pool that is to provide the Democratic and Republican nominees with \$20 million each. Also, a party that has received at least 5 percent of the vote in a previous presidential election qualifies for federal money on a similar vote formula for the next general election. Together, the provisions could give a McCarthy party several million dollars going into 1980. "You could almost perpetuate it as a political movement," he says. "It could be a revolving fund."

But that's not his intent now, he says. Instead, he is fighting the new law on the grounds that it deprives citizens

who want to give more than the \$1000-per-candidate limit of their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and petition. Subsidizing the two major parties, he says, is like having two supported religions in the country. "I'm sure if it had been brought up at the Constitutional Convention," he told the University of Chicago audience, "it would have been thrown out in three minutes."

As a practical consideration, it makes his fund-raising immeasurably more difficult, since liberal fat cats traditionally have been soft touches. "It's almost as easy to get \$10,000 as it is to get \$1000," he says. To fill the gap left by the demise of the big contribution, he is considering seeking money in conjunction with his petition effort for ballot position in each of the states. In California, for instance, about 350,000 signatures are required to qualify for a place on the ballot, and McCarthy may ask everyone who signs to give a dollar. In some states, however, only a relative handful of signatures is needed.

As for the reimbursement if he wins 5 percent of the vote, McCarthy says now he won't ask for it, because he is opposing the whole law on principle. However, the situation could look different to him in November, 1976, if his effort has yielded any promise of building a continuing third party.

For now, though, McCarthy's eye is on 1976 with no greater expectations than testing the political establishment and its clichés about what is and is not possible. At Oakton Community College, somebody asked him if his campaign had a symbol. He thought for a minute, then said he had decided to use the subject of one of his poems—"The Aardvark"—an African anteater. "The interesting thing about the aardvark," he said, using lines from the poem, "is that we've never been able to determine that it evolved from anything, or evolved into anything. Also, it can't distinguish colors; it sees gray both night and day. And it lives by eating termites, which thrive on dead wood . . . But I wouldn't want to press this too far."

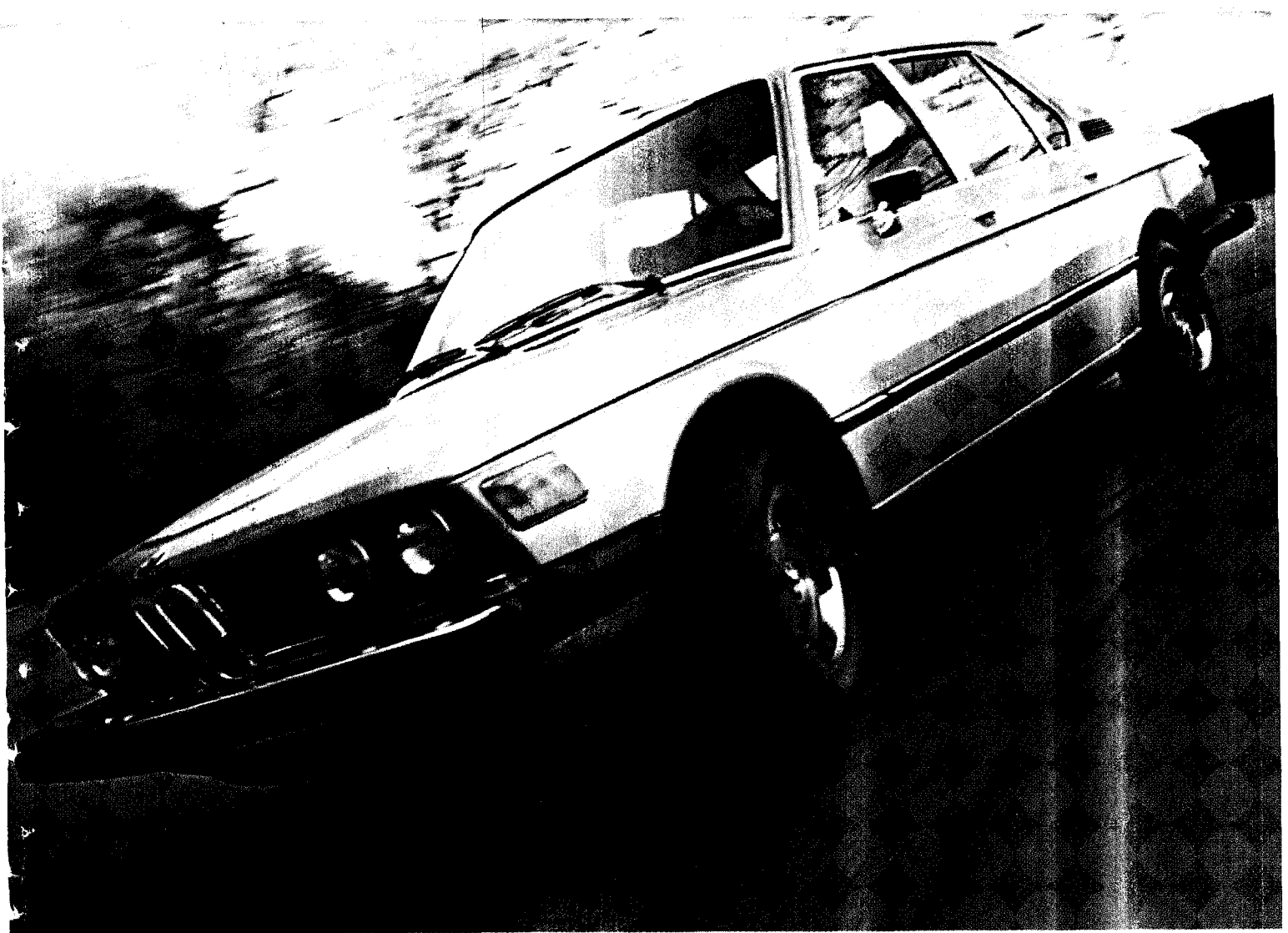
The audience chuckled. Good old Gene McCarthy. But of course he can't be taken seriously. Not twice.

—JULES WITCOVER

REPORTS & COMMENT CONTRIBUTORS

Stanley Meisler is a correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, based in Mexico City.

Jules Witcover reports on national politics for the *Washington Post*.



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Innocent Bystander

The A. J. Liebling Memorial Jeremiad

by L. E. Sissman

As regular readers of this column may remember, I do a lot of re-reading—and re-rereading—of favorite books. Among these are the works of A. J. Liebling, who ranks, I believe, as our best journalist since H. L. Mencken and before John McPhee. Liebling, if you haven't read him—and I fear that most of his books may be out of print—is sort of an American George Orwell, a passionate pursuer of the truth, but with the added ingredient of what can only be called a Rabelaisian sense of humor. When he attacked The Wayward Press in the *New Yorker* column of the same name, his weapons were satire and irony as well as decency and common sense.

Rereading William Cole's excellent anthology, *The Most of A. J. Liebling*, the other day, it struck me that: a) there are no journalists capable of Liebling's kind of risible indictment around today, and b) his memory should be honored, a decade after his death, in some substantial way (it's true that some members of the working press have named their informal annual convention, a kind of riposte to the concurrent convention of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, for Liebling, but that seems a fugitive and unfulfilling kind of monument, and their conventions are for the most part vapid). A man who could write as follows about monopoly cities (in which one owner controls all the papers in town) deserves better than that: "There are also cities, like New Orleans, where the over-power in silly hands has led to large-scale disaster. There the *Times-Picayune* company, which owned the only morning paper and the *States*, one of the two evenings, bought the *Item*, the other evening paper, 'forcing to the wall' the competing publisher by pressing

3.5 million dollars against his navel."

Then it occurred to me that a useful as well as honorific kind of homage to Liebling might consist in taking a long, hard, objective look at today's metropolitan dailies, to see how much, if any, they had improved since he pronounced judgment on them in the fifties and early sixties. First I reread his book, *The Press*, to refresh my memory of his strictures. Among them were a healthy scorn for the linguistic absurdities (akin to those of crossword puzzle makers) created by severe restrictions on the length of headlines; the proliferation of tired—and absolutely predictable—clichés (like "wasteful government" and "overburdened taxpayer") in the news and editorial columns; the multiplication of "experts," defined by Liebling as men who write what they construe to be the meaning of something they haven't seen; the cowardice of publishers who, with an eye to their advertising revenues, hesitate to afflict or offend the local commercial powers; the persistence of sensationalism—and sentimentality, or pure corn—in pictures and headlines; and the tendency of most American dailies to pursue an excessively conservative—even reactionary—editorial line.

Having reread *The Master*, I then made a selection of daily newspapers to scrutinize. Since I was interested not in the lowest common denominator, but in the furthest advance of the state of the art of journalism, I chose not the mid-American small-city dailies, but a handful of papers noted for their excellence in one field or another—papers that might conceivably make (or actually have made) *Time's* list of the ten best American newspapers. I chose the *New York Times* for its standing as the newspaper of record in this country; the *Washington Post* for its position as leading authority—and leading gadfly—in the capital; the *Boston Globe* because it is said to have improved out of recognition in the last decade, and to be among the ten best U.S. papers today; the *Christian Science Monitor* for both its high reputation and its noble experiment with a new tabloid format; and the *New York Daily News* for its reputed combination of breeziness and professionalism in the handling of headlines and pictures alike. I see all of these papers at fairly regular intervals, in some cases every day, so I knew approximately what to expect; but to draw the sharpest possible contrast between

them, I confined myself to their editions for just one day, Friday, June 27, 1975. I then withdrew into my study and attempted to read every word of all five papers—a fairly ambitious undertaking, since these were thick editions. I didn't, in the event, read every word, but before my eyes gave out on the third day, I came close. I also came to some surprising—at least to me—conclusions.

Let me begin by generalizing. Then I'll get particular. Though none of these papers came from a one-owner city, I've read repeatedly that the number of such monopolies has increased vastly since Liebling wrote about them. But I think it's fair to say that in spite of this trend, the surviving papers, even in some very middle-American cities, have probably become more, rather than less, liberal during the intervening years. Even in a rigidly conservative market like Worcester, Massachusetts, for example, the one-owner papers, the morning *Telegram* and evening *Gazette*, have become less than wholly predictable in their editorial stands on such subjects as, say, labor unionism and women's rights. (Let us remember, too, that the arch-conservative Chicago *Tribune* startled the world last year by calling for Nixon's resignation.) The general loosening of archaic scruples, the shaming experiences of Vietnam and Watergate, the wide-ranging new doubts about the credibility of our institutions, and perhaps also pressure from news magazines and television news, have conspired to force all but the most reactionary papers to give us at least an inkling of both sides of a story, in the news hole as well as on the editorial page.

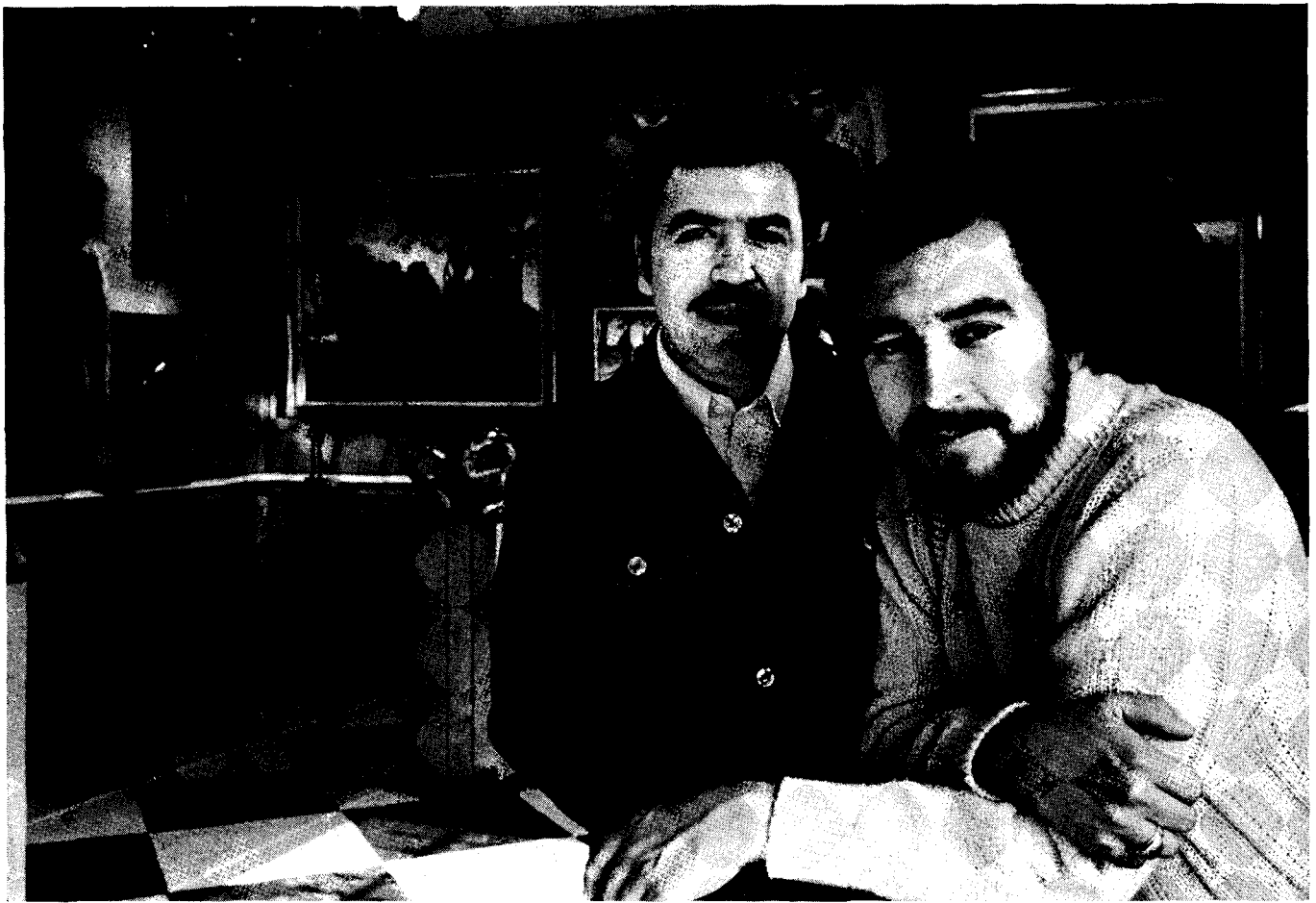
Admittedly there has been a trendy, but still on balance healthy, new emphasis on investigative reporting. The *Times's* handling of the Pentagon Papers and the *Post's* long-running scoop on Watergate have made muckraking not only desirable but downright *de rigueur* on many papers (and, incidentally, have stimulated the biggest J-school enrollments in years); even the small, one-owner city may find itself reading reports of local connivance or corruption in the local press.

At the same time, let us also admit that the physical product—the daily newspaper itself—has progressed almost not at all since Liebling's day. Headlines remain, with a few honorable ex-

L. E. Sissman is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*.

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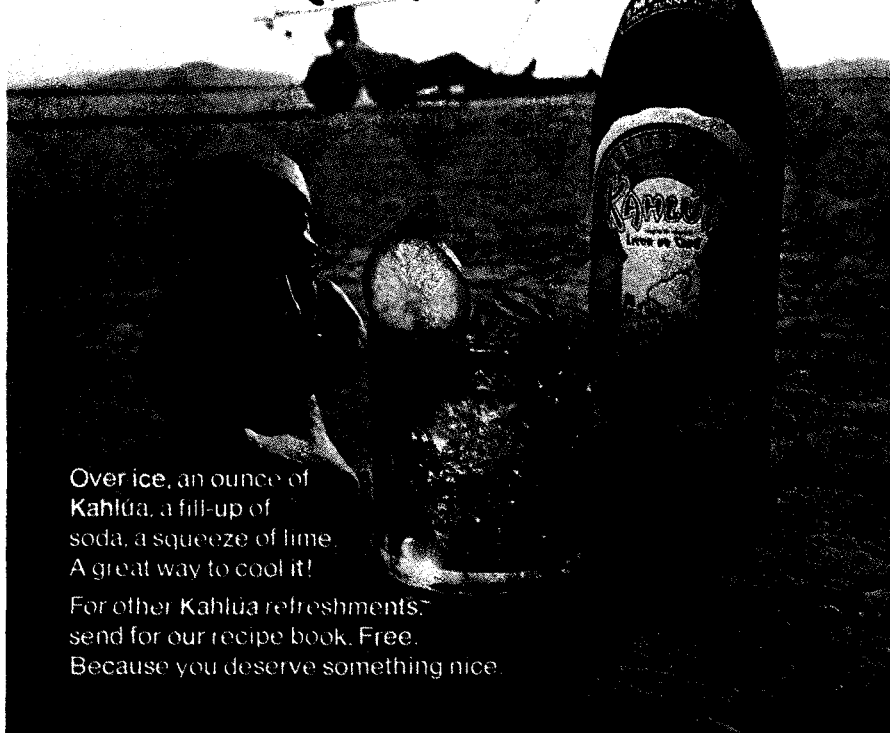
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BYSTANDER

ceptions, exercises in deciphering far-fetched synonyms or unintelligible rubrics (like the use of "unit" for anything from a congressional committee to a Parent-Teacher Association). Stories are uniformly written in a gray, awkward prose out of some twenties style-book, spun out (except, of course, in tabloids) to unconscionable lengths; pictures are at times graceless and utilitarian or, worse, cutesy to the nines and captioned to match; even the Op-Ed page, that vaunted innovation of the sixties, is too often merely a repository for the daily screeds of the resident (in Liebling's sense) experts, and too seldom a place for the ignored, afflicted, and obscure to speak out; in fact, the biggest bright spot I can see in today's newspaper is the editorial cartoon, which frequently has more to say than the rest of the editorial page. But let's look at our five papers.

The New York Times, studied objectively, is stunningly tough to read. The headlines, often cramped into a single column, reek of rewrites: "Fears on Refugees Called Unfounded"; "Jobless Pay Plan Extended to Jan. 1 in Congress Vote"; "Accord Reported on Plot Evidence" (whatever that may mean); "Legal Base Stems from British Era" (a well-veiled reference to Mrs. Gandhi's seizure of power); and the virtually meaningless "Study Finds Gaps in Catholic Press." Nor are the unintelligibilities confined to headlines. A Bernard Weinraub report on the situation in New Delhi refers to something called "an extraordinary crisis." A Douglas Kneeland piece on the sociology of Vietnamese refugees states that fears about the refugees' unassimilability appear to be unfounded—and then quotes, unquestioningly, the Administration's own sociological studies. Things aren't helped by the following typo: "The second study involved 177,106 of the approximately 130,000 refugees. . . ." Worse, an article headlined "Carey-Deal Oil Man a 'Swashbuckler'" nowhere mentions the connection of its subject, Bart Chamberlain, Jr., with the Carey Oil interests. And so on. The editorial page features a painfully predictable lead editorial opposing Mrs. Gandhi's coup, and not much else; Op-Ed features Reston in a playful mood (on the Azores) and Tom Wicker at a pitch of subdued militance on wiretap-



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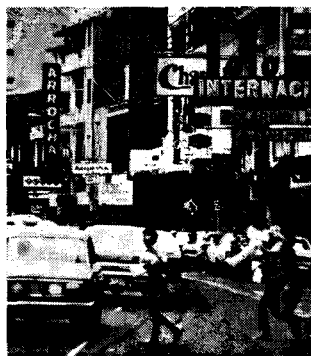


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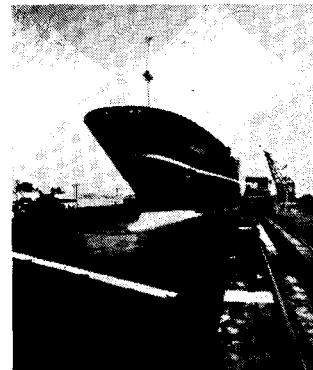
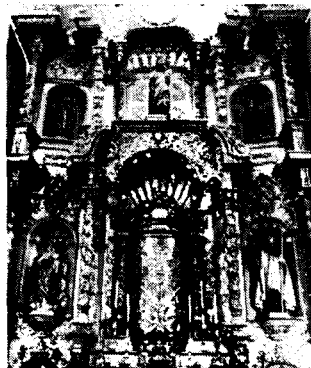


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BYSTANDER

ping, as well as a Yale professor on the need for more research into narcotics and Irving Howe on the financial plight of City University: hardly a barn-burner.

What's good in this issue of the *Times*? Page one of Section Two, as almost always, has a couple of excellent features (on the Newport Jazz Festival and the education, in American Sign Language, of a female gorilla); Vincent Canby is stimulatingly scathing about Richard Brooks's movie *Bite the Bullet*; and Anatole Broyard, always an interesting reviewer, has both nice and thoughtful things to say about Nora Ephron. And that's about it, alas.

The Washington *Post* fares no better; despite the *Herald Tribune*-ish format, the headlines are, if anything, more clunky than those of the *Times*; on page one we are greeted with a three-column head that reads "Gandhi Assumes Dictatorial Rule; Arrests Mount" (for a second there I thought she had apprehended a horse), and, directly under it, "Park Says North Eyeing Seoul Raid." On page three, "Church Bars Open Hearings On Death Plots" turns out to refer not to the Church of Rome but to the Church of Idaho. And so on *passim*, including the cryptic and sinister "'Leak' Charge Seen As U.S. Pressure" on page twenty-two. The stories themselves are straight stylebook stuff—longish and dull, couched in standard newspaperese. On the editorial page, though, there are two bright spots: Herblock's biting cartoon on Indira Gandhi and a surprising editorial that dares—unlike the *Times*—to stress the triteness and technicality of the corrupt practices of which she was convicted, while simultaneously deploring the dictatorial nature of her reaction. Op-Ed is determinedly tame; even the letters column leads off with a lobbying plea for deregulating natural gas prices by—who else?—the Governor of Oklahoma. From there on out, the *Post* is just a progression of perfectly standard newspaper features, from the curiously debilitated Style section to the double handful of comic strips. Nothing here to indicate that this paper pulled off the scoop of the century just a couple of years ago.

The Boston *Globe*. Another *Herald Tribune* format. But here something interesting has happened: the headlines are written in an approximation of plain English. Viz., on the front page, "Mrs. Gandhi orders arrest of thou-

sands," "2 FBI men killed on S.D. reservation," and "Economy gains for 3d month." The staff-written articles, while unscintillating, are couched in straightforward prose that is sufficiently readable. There's even a small exposé of questionable towing contracts. The editorial page seems, for this day at least, a bit parochial, and the *Globe*'s cartoonist, Paul Szep, who'd use a steam hammer to crack a nut, is not among my favorites, but the Op-Ed page is inviting, with two pictures and three cartoons, along with articles on local politics, busing, and the need for "real revolutionary change" (this by an avowed radical. To the *Globe*'s credit, the article on busing is from an opponent; the paper itself supports busing Boston's children to the schools). Otherwise, the June 27 issue is largely devoted, like other metropolitan dailies, to features; but it is highly notable that many of these are written by the paper's own substantial staff of columnists, not by syndicated outsiders.

It was short work to read the *Daily News* and the *Monitor*, and my comments will be brief as well. Both suffer from the limitations of the tabloid format, with its tiny news hole. The *Monitor* is a pale (and thin) shadow of its former self; its difficulties in obtaining advertising based on its widely scattered circulation are too painfully evident. As for the *News*, it soldiers on precisely as in Liebling's glorious days: the scare word "Peril" is in the page-one head; there's a "Mystery Survivor" (of a jet crash at JFK) on page three; and a shot of naval officers watching a beauty contest is too cutely captioned "Weighing Ankles." The rest of the paper is the usual Hearst-Patterson progression of canned features, dozens of them, from Jumble and crossword puzzles to three and a half pages of comics, including a vintage conversation between Orphan Annie and Daddy Warbucks (both of whom I had thought dead like Harold Gray). All this is interrupted only by the usual waspish and reactionary editorial page, in which Mrs. Gandhi is called "a Grade A phony and a 24-karat hypocrite," and those who winced at a Gerald Ford statement on the use of nuclear weapons in Korea are characterized as "Nervous Nellies."

It seems fitting to end this small memorial to A. J. Liebling with the observation that he was a prophet as well as a critic; in many cases, his comments on the press of ten and twenty years ago apply, alas, with equal force today.

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ORIENT EXPRESS

SIR: In his article entitled "Misery on the Orient Express" (July *Atlantic*), Paul Theroux states in the first paragraph, "Lady Chatterley's husband took it." In fact it was Lady Chatterley herself, accompanying her father, Sir Malcolm, who traveled on the train for part of the return journey from Venice to London after their vacation.

MARGARET BENDER
Miami, Fla.

SIR: The depth of Paul Theroux's "Misery on the Orient Express" demonstrates that it was he, and not Duffill, who was left in Domodossola.

ROBERT L. DILENSCHNEIDER
New York, N.Y.

SIR: Paul Theroux has caught the whole idea and evokes the feeling and even the sounds and smells of travel by European train. And of course chalets do look like clumps of mushrooms when you pass them rapidly at a distance. I never realized what they all remind one of until I read that phrase. Just think of all the busy little gnomes under those spreading, mushroomlike roofs!

When my father and I took the Orient Express from Istanbul to Milan in 1930, there may have been a dining car but, owing to a very anti-American virus, I was unable to eat anything except a delicious Near Eastern dish now widely known in this country—yogurt.

Thank you for reminding me of the Orient Express.

ELIZABETH LAWTON
Fort Myers Beach, Fla.

FOR WANT OF A NAIL

SIR: From "How Much Does Freedom Matter?" in the July issue: "And so Borgia marched off, but then turned and lay siege to Urbino instead." The

article matters more than its grammar, but when even Daniel Patrick Moynihan and *The Atlantic* are confused about "to lie" (intransitive) and "to lay" (transitive), one despairs for Modern American Usage. No matter who or what lay in wait at Urbino, I insist that Borgia laid siege to it.

DAN WICKENDEN
New York, N.Y.

SIR: When Mr. Moynihan lists three reasons for our "thin" relationship with India, he disingenuously omits a fourth—India's nuclear experiment of May, 1974. It was disheartening to see how literally India followed the example of the second largest democracy.

MILTON McDONALD
Buies Creek, N.C.

ADVICE & CONSENT

SIR: Re the exchange between Lappé and Gaylin and Dr. Jacqueline Kasun (The Mail, July *Atlantic*): their arguments seem to have passed each other like ships in the night.

In their article on the reasonableness of permitting experimentation on about-to-be-aborted fetuses, Lappé and Gaylin pointed out the absurdity of permitting abortion (often by dismemberment and with no thought to anesthetization of the fetus) and then denying doctors the right to experiment on such fetuses when the knowledge gained could be of help to other babies who will not be aborted. With this line of argumentation no reasonable person could quarrel. Dr. Kasun's very strong anti-abortion position takes no notice of this most significant aspect of their article.

At the same time, however, Lappé and Gaylin are mistaken in their belief that their article is unrelated to the abortion issue. To those to whom abortion seems to be a grossly immoral act,

the suggestion that once the act has been decided upon, we ought at least to turn it to good use will seem outrageously opportunistic. And if it is true, as the response of Gaylin and Lappé implies, that one of them has moral reservations about abortion, it should be clear to them that to encourage fetal research of the sort they suggest will have the secondary effect of lending a certain respectability to abortion itself and serving to solidify it as an institution within the medical community. Dr. Kasun's letter is not wholly off the point.

CAROL ALTEKRUSE BERGER, PH.D.
PATRICK F. BERGER, PH.D.
Creve Coeur, Mo.

SIR: Re the article on Armand Hammer ("The One-Man Flying Multinational," June *Atlantic*).

Just to keep the record straight, Mutual of New York did not put money into an "exploration fund" after Dr. Hammer took over Oxy. We did, however, purchase \$15 million of gas reserves in the form of a production payment in the Lathrop gas field after the field had been discovered and the substantial reserves proved up. It was basically the utilization of this cash flow that started Oxy on its way.

HENRY S. ROMAINE
*Mutual Life Insurance Company
of New York*

SIR: Claire Sterling's interesting article on Indonesia (July *Atlantic*) has one major fault: she discusses the country's rapid population growth, but says nothing about measures being taken to curb that increase. Actually, Indonesia has a rather successful birth control program in operation.

According to the Agency for International Development's Office of Population, the Suharto government increased funds allocated to the program

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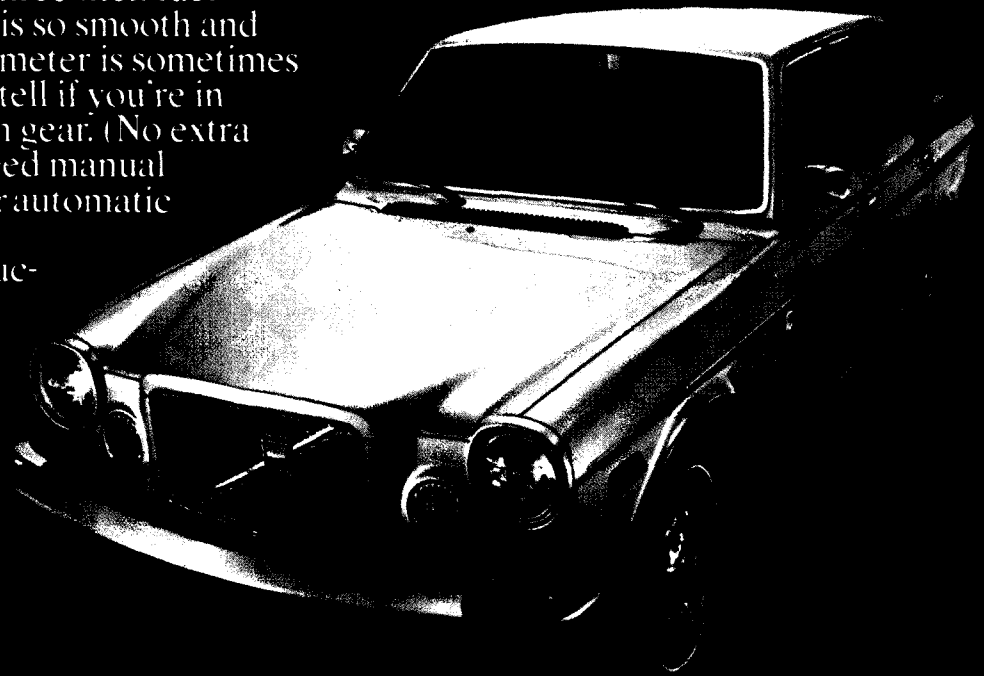
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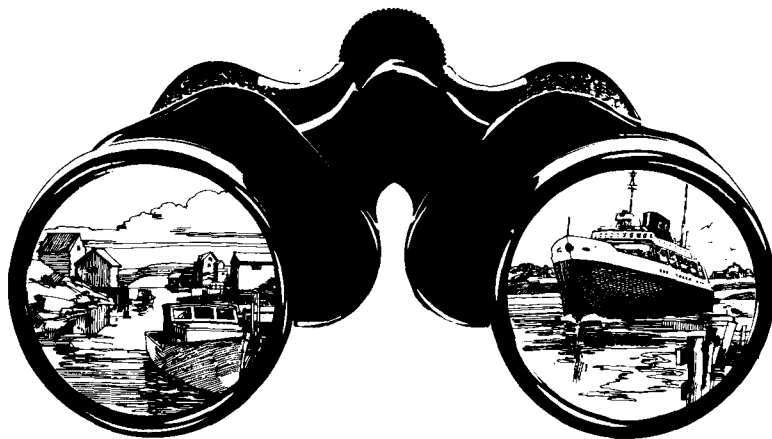
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from \$75,000 in 1969 to \$8.4 million in 1974, while foreign assistance, much of it in the form of U.S. money, rose from \$2.1 million to about \$11.5 million. The program, initially limited to crowded Java and Bali, has been successful; today, 18 percent of the women on those islands are practicing contraception. In 1974 the program was extended to ten of the twenty outer island provinces, thereby bringing fertility control within reach of 90 percent of the nation's people.

HARRY W. HENDERSON
Washington, D.C.

SIR: John Bender (The Mail, July Atlantic) makes a sweeping generalization when he says, "America's truckers are nothing but the safest, most well-mannered drivers on the road. Safety is the number one governing factor in a trucker's life."

More than once (before the federal 55 m.p.h. speed limit) have I been tailgated at 65-70 m.p.h. (on a two-lane road where the legal limit was 65 m.p.h.) by a lead-footed trucker who at first opportunity sped around me and left me in his dust.

And if safety is "the number one governing factor," why don't those who drive double trailer trucks hauling sand and gravel either not load them so full or have them covered so that there is no chance of large gravel—i.e., rocks—spilling out and possibly wrecking the windshield of a following vehicle.

Safety first: phooey!

LOTHAR GEIPEL
Adrian, Mich.

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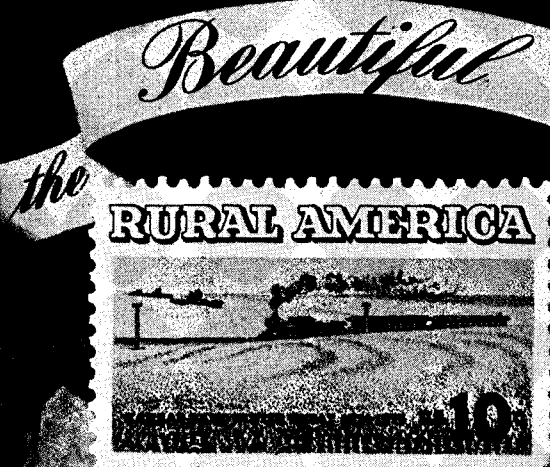
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THE MAN WHO RUNS THE SENATE

Bobby Byrd: An upstart comes to power

by Sanford J. Ungar

Robert Byrd, a little-known, fiddle-playing West Virginian, is the Senate's Democratic whip, probably its next majority leader, and just possibly a favorite son at the 1976 Democratic Convention. Says he: "I believe that a big man can make a small job important." Some of his colleagues think Byrd also proves the converse: that a big job can help a small man to grow.

"Bobby Byrd is a member of the early morning health club," says the master of ceremonies. "Every morning, early, he gets up, calls Mike Mansfield, and asks him, 'How's your health?'"

The occasion is a luncheon "roasting" in honor of Robert Carlyle Byrd, fifty-seven, junior senator from West Virginia, and the Democratic whip of the Senate. It is given by the P. T. Barnum Tent of the Circus Saints & Sinners Club of America—one of those slick and seamy Washington events where nearly everyone is called a "VIP," the food is inedible, and the true aficionados arrive early to watch a striptease show over pre-lunch cocktails

before the more worldly political hoopla begins. Byrd, the fall guy for the day, does not ordinarily travel in these hell-raising stag circles. He has a standing rule against attending downtown (off Capitol Hill) lunches and, in fact, proclaims himself to have "no time to socialize" at all; there is too much work for that. During twenty-three years in Washington, he has been to one football game (to crown the queen at half time), three baseball games (two of them in one day, a doubleheader), and one movie (he found it dull and left in the middle). He does watch television now and then, however, and once protested on the Senate floor when *Gunsmoke*, a favorite of his, was canceled.

But such are the responsibilities of power and acceptance on the national scene that Byrd has reluctantly agreed to be feted by the Saints & Sinners, to try to enjoy himself. Business on the Senate floor makes him unavoidably but conveniently late—it would hardly do if a statesman soon to speak at a national Baptist convention in Atlantic City appeared at a striptease. Once on hand, in a vast ballroom of the Shoreham Hotel, he sits through interminable introductions of other people, some very unfunny skits about moonshine liquor in "West By-God Virginia," and a nightclub comic whose routine consists largely of imitating drunken men coming home late at night to their angry wives. Given his turn, Byrd allows as how the affair "is an honor for a country boy from the hills

and hollows of West Virginia," and he announces that the \$500 charitable contribution in his name which is part of the day's honors will go to the family of a police officer recently killed in Beckley, West Virginia. He surprises many people in the audience by telling a few off-color jokes himself. Then the usually dour Senator picks up his most reliable prop, his fiddle, and plunks out "Rye Whiskey," complete with hoots and lyrics. That brings the house down, so he plays another, "Goin' Up Cripple Creek," which he dedicates to Mike Mansfield.

Byrd's lusting after Mike Mansfield's job as majority leader has become one of the central factors and favorite jokes of Democratic politics in the Senate. It is all "an exaggerated assumption," says he; "I don't have the consuming desire that people attribute to me"—although, "if the position were to open up, I would be compelled to run for it. I believe in advancing forward, moving up." For the moment, Byrd insists, he is content to work under Mansfield, whom he names without a trace of hesitation as the colleague he most respects: "I admire his patience, his fairness and his honorableness, his integrity. . . . This may appear to be self-serving, but that is how I feel."

The relationship, by all accounts and appearances, works very well indeed. Mansfield plays the senior statesman, the venerated elder from Montana who makes broad policy pronouncements and worries about the future of the republic, while Byrd runs the Senate. Through a series of procedural changes he has initiated or supervised during the past few years, including a shortening of the Senate's "morning hour" and of the speeches that may be given during it, Byrd controls the floor and, most of the time, who may have it and how it may be used. (One rule, which has other senators depending upon him and their aides detesting him, bans all senatorial staff from the chamber except when the man they work for is speaking.) He hammers out the "consent agreements" that keep the Senate running smoothly and efficiently—and, some argue, without its old charm and unpredictability—and he stays on the floor most of the time to be sure that the agreements are carried out. In a word, he is probably as powerful as anyone in the legislative branch, because of the access he controls and the shrewdness with which he uses it.

Most senators in both parties seem to feel that Byrd performs his tasks fairly, although he has been known to pull a few fast ones on liberal Democrats he considered to be advocating extreme positions and on Republicans he suspected of exploiting procedure for partisan advantage. During the recent debate over how to solve the disputed New Hampshire Senate election, for example, he said he would happily go along with a GOP sug-

gestion to have the proceedings televised, but on the strict condition that the Republicans agree to set a time limit on the debate. The Republicans, who wanted to filibuster until the Democrats agreed to send the whole issue back to New Hampshire for a new election, quickly backed out.

"This never would have happened if Lyndon Johnson were still with us," said an aide to one liberal Democratic senator when three conservative southern members of the party repeatedly foiled attempts by the Democratic leadership to invoke cloture and cut off debate on the dispute over how to settle the New Hampshire election deadlock this summer. Sooner or later Johnson would have forced a resolution of the issue, whether by discipline or backroom deal. Indeed, there could be no greater contrast between the Johnson style of Senate leadership—in which arms were twisted and egos bruised if necessary to work out compromises and pass critical legislation—and the soft, easygoing Mansfield style, which places full confidence in the ability of the Senate eventually to "work its will." The question is how Byrd will handle the majority leadership if he succeeds to it. "There are advantages to both [the Mansfield and Johnson] styles," he says diplomatically; "but if I had to choose between the two, I prefer the Mansfield approach You have to remember, you have a different Senate now from when Mr. Johnson was the leader. He was in a position to utilize discipline more than it can be used now, and there is no longer a very cohesive southern bloc." That cohesiveness was one of the key constants in Johnson's formula for working his will on the Senate. One important difference is that the Democrats today have a far larger, more unwieldy, and somewhat less pragmatic majority in the Senate than in the Johnson days of the 1950s; a growing number of senators are inclined to vote their conscience on this matter or that. But many senators suspect that Byrd would try to assert greater authority over his troops than he is prepared to admit.

B Byrd is an enigmatic man, churlish and angry one moment, and coming on with a sly, foxy smile the next. He is capable of alternating rote recitation of political boiler plate and florid eighteenth-century rhetoric with frank and insightful political analyses. He is discouraged by Gerald Ford's attacks on Congress, and believes that while they may win points for the President in the short run, they will ultimately backfire. "Mr. Ford knows how the system works. He is as partisan as any of us," he complains; "I think he has a mistaken impression that he can follow the approach that Mr. Truman followed. But circumstances are a lot different now than when Mr. Truman was President, and Mr. Ford is not Mr. Truman."

Robert Byrd came to Congress as a conservative.

Sanford J. Ungar is *The Atlantic's* Washington editor.

Many of his early attitudes and some of the premises he holds to today were developed while he was coming of age as a poor white boy in West Virginia, struggling for a meager existence during the Depression. At first he did not go to Sunday school, because he was embarrassed that he had no socks to wear. For many of those years he earned only \$50 a month, even after he had a wife to support (the Byrds were married in 1937). The Byrd family's first refrigerator was not even an ice-box, but half an orange crate nailed outside the kitchen window; there was no car, and when the Byrds wanted to go somewhere they borrowed one from his father-in-law, a coal miner.

Byrd's manner is taut, and he is notorious on Capitol Hill for being tough with his staff; even on the night before a holiday, they may wait for him to dismiss them before going home. Sometimes his penchant for hard work goes to extremes: when his trusted secretary Ethel Low is away, for example, Byrd himself opens all the office mail. His personal life is spartan. He takes no vacations, rarely touches alcoholic beverages, and is most comfortable in the company of his wife, Erma, two daughters and sons-in-law, and six grandchildren, who are all close at hand in the Virginia suburbs of the capital. There he relaxes with a cigar or the fiddle; often he plays a tune before going to sleep at night. He has very few close friends, in Washington or West Virginia. The senator from whom he has sought advice in recent years is John Pastore of Rhode Island. Asked whom he really trusts and feels he can confide in, he answers only, "My wife."

Few people knew or cared much about Bobby Byrd (for decades "Senator Byrd" meant Harry Flood Byrd of Virginia) until he achieved a dragon slayer's reputation in January, 1971, by defeating the incumbent Democratic whip, none other than Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts. The feat was popularly portrayed at the time as an overnight coup, a blow at Kennedy while he was still suffering the effects of the Chappaquiddick scandal. Byrd will not discuss the subject, but he probably does have an old antipathy to the Kennedy family. He supported Hubert Humphrey over John Kennedy in the crucial West Virginia Democratic primary in 1960 (although he was really a Lyndon Johnson man, and went to the convention that year as a Johnson-committed delegate), and had some nasty quarrels on the Senate floor with Robert Kennedy. He clearly would not favor the nomination of Teddy Kennedy in 1976, and says bluntly, "If the pollsters and media would leave [Kennedy] alone, he would keep on being a good senator." He does not like fashionable, sophisticated liberals, whether as members of dynasties or as individuals.

Actually, Byrd's 1971 coup was long in the making. In the course of four years, as secretary of the



Robert C. Byrd

Senate Democratic Conference, a previously meaningless job in itself, Byrd came to function as Mansfield's de facto right-hand man, doing the routine chores that did not interest Kennedy. While Byrd's better-known colleagues were off at cocktail parties and other ruinous pursuits ("I despise cocktail parties," he says; "you just stand around and waste time"), he would stay late at night in the office of the Senate parliamentarian, mastering the intricacies of the Senate rules. Now he knows those rules better than any of his peers, and can make the rules do whatever is needed by him, his friends, or his party.

"I believe that a big man can make a small job important," says Byrd in one of his favorite bits of armchair philosophy. Some of his colleagues believe that while he is a good example of that maxim, he is also living proof of the converse principle, that a big job can help a small man to grow. During his early days in the Senate—he was elected with the 1958 crop of Democrats who profited from President Eisenhower's decline in popularity—Byrd took mostly easy, conservative positions. He railed against welfare cheaters and voted against major civil rights legislation, including the 1964 law; he came to have an unbroken record as a hawk on the Vietnam war and related international issues. He denounced student protesters

and, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, took his turn worshipping at the altar of J. Edgar Hoover, even after the FBI director's performance had begun to slip. But by the time his senior colleague from West Virginia, Jennings Randolph, an old-time New Dealer, nominated him for whip when the Democratic caucus convened in 1971, Byrd had metamorphosed into a moderate and had enough progressive votes on his record—including support for open housing and gun control—to be acceptable across the spectrum.

The transformation has continued and intensified. Although he is still regarded more as an institutional creature than as a creative thinker on substantive issues, Byrd has taken several steps leftward into the Democratic mainstream. He talks about the danger that we in the United States will "overextend ourselves" in the world, and he urges a careful review of all of the nation's international commitments, treaties, and alliances. Once a vehement anticommunist, he now supports the resumption of diplomatic relations with Cuba, and he accepted an invitation to visit China this summer. (He was invited once before, but turned down the opportunity because it would have meant being away while the Senate was in session.) This year he supported an extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, though he opposed it twice in the past.

Named to the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1969, he put a sharp, young—and liberal—aide onto the committee staff in 1971 and then used that vantage point to build a part of his new image. Byrd rarely attended the long Judiciary Committee hearings in the spring of 1972 on the nomination of Richard Kleindienst as Attorney General, but he authorized his Judiciary Committee aide, Tom Hart, to work closely with assistants to Edward Kennedy, of all people, in turning up new ammunition for the anti-Kleindienst effort, especially details of the suspect dealings between the Nixon Administration and the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. Every night Byrd met with Hart to review the latest developments, and he may be one of the few people in Washington who has read the entire 1751-page Kleindienst hearing record. Finally, although he declared Kleindienst to be an able lawyer, and "a man of remarkable charm and ingratiating personality," he took the Senate floor to say that he would vote against the nomination because "important questions remain unanswered and . . . uneasy doubts remain which cannot be explained away." Byrd was one of only nineteen senators to vote against Kleindienst in the end, but the onetime "law and order" hardliner from the West Virginia hills was becoming a leader of Democrats who saw battle lines drawn with the Nixon Administration over issues of legal and political ethics—issues that later came under the wide Watergate umbrella.

Even before L. Patrick Gray III, acting director

of the FBI for a year, was nominated by Nixon as permanent director of the agency, Byrd declared that Gray would be unacceptable to him. He obtained copies of secret Watergate-related depositions from *Washington Post* reporters, talked personally on the telephone with airline pilots who disapproved of Gray's controversial handling of a hijack case (FBI agents shot out the tires of the plane), and relentlessly cross-examined the acting director before the Judiciary Committee. Eventually, it was Byrd who extracted from Gray the damaging admission that John W. Dean III, Nixon's White House counsel, had "probably" lied to the FBI during the early stages of the Watergate investigation. That statement led Dean to begin talking with prosecutors in order to protect himself, which in turn helped break the case open. In May of 1973, Senator William Proxmire (Democrat of Wisconsin), ordinarily no great admirer of his party's whip, declared that Robert Byrd was "the unsung hero" of the Watergate investigation then gathering force.

When Clarence M. Kelley was named FBI director in the summer of 1973, Byrd spent an entire day quizzing him and asked the only tough questions of the hearings, zeroing in on the issue of whether FBI practices violated civil rights. He negotiated a promise of independence for the Watergate special prosecutor and demanded close scrutiny of Gerald Ford and Nelson Rockefeller, the first two Vice Presidents named under the terms of the Twenty-Fifth Amendment.

Byrd's switch—his new role as a man concerned about civil liberties and a Watergate warrior—was a subject of great curiosity and some wonderment on Capitol Hill. For his own part, he insists that it is the issues and the circumstances which have changed more than his own position; but one long-time Byrd-watcher says, "He realizes where the tide is going, and he will drift with it to compile a public record that is more defensible and acceptable" than his old narrowly conservative posture. Another suggests simply, "It was inevitable: he went national."

Byrd still keeps the faith on some points of conservative orthodoxy, denouncing busing, for example, not only on policy grounds, but also because "it is a waste of money—buying buses and burning all that gasoline." The slightest mention of repression by the South Korean government sets him off on a tirade: "If we want to talk about repression, let's talk about India. We have to look out for our own interests sometimes; we can't tell everyone what kind of government to have. . . . As long as a government is pro-United States and the country is important to our long-range national interests, we have got to look out for Uncle Sam first." He frets about "over-liberal" social theorists, and is delighted that the "libertarian" justices on the Supreme Court have been balanced out by

The Man Who Runs the Senate

Nixon appointees. (During his period of flirtation and friendship with the Nixon Administration, he himself was considered for a Supreme Court slot.)

The result of all this is a jagged, if well-mapped, course through the middle. Byrd has his own conception of where the American people stand ideologically—somewhere just right of center—and if he has his way, he will steer the Democratic party there. He is increasingly asserting himself as a national spokesman for the party, appearing on Sunday network television interview programs at the drop of a hat. He is said to be looking for a good speechwriter who can take on the Republican Administration.

“Don’t forget 1924,” says a devoted Byrd follower who takes a visiting stranger aside after the Senator has addressed a luncheon of the Parkersburg (West Virginia) Rotary Club. “The Democratic Convention was deadlocked and there seemed to be no way out. Finally, on the ninth day and the hundred-and-third ballot, they turned to a West Virginia boy, John W. Davis.”

That is one way of looking at the events of 1924. John W. Davis had been a member of Congress, Solicitor General of the United States, counsel for the American Red Cross, an adviser to President Woodrow Wilson at the Versailles peace conference, ambassador to Great Britain, and a Wall Street lawyer who represented, among others, the House of Morgan before he became the compromise presidential nominee of the hopelessly divided Democratic party in the race against Calvin Coolidge. But he was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, and practiced law there for several years before being elected to the state’s House of Delegates in 1899 and going on to greater fame and fortune.

Robert Byrd started in the West Virginia House of Delegates too, but his background was rather more humble than that of Davis. He was brought to the state from North Carolina when he was a year old, after his mother had died in a flu epidemic, to be raised in coalfields country by an impoverished aunt and uncle who adopted him. (His real name is Cornelius Calvin Sale, Jr., a fact he learned when he was sixteen. When his brother, Clyde Sale, wrote to him from North Carolina on the occasion of his victory over Edward Kennedy in 1971, he learned for the first time that his true birthdate was November 20, 1917, two months earlier than he had always believed and than is listed in *Who’s Who*.) He worked as a garbage collector, a gas station attendant, a butcher, and, during World War II, a welder in the shipyards of Baltimore and Tampa; it was only on his election to Congress in 1952, at the age of thirty-five, that he gave up his grocery store in Sophia, a tiny town in

Raleigh County. His law degree took ten years to earn in night school, first at George Washington University and then at American University, while he was a member of the House and, later, the Senate.

But the analogy between Byrd and Davis, however flawed, is picking up steam in West Virginia. Davis’ nomination came in Madison Square Garden in New York, which is under consideration as a possible site for the 1976 Democratic Convention. Then, as now, the party, although thought to attract the loyalties of a majority of the public, was torn asunder by factional disputes, even in the aftermath of shameful Republican scandals. Calvin Coolidge, like Gerald Ford, was a man who had succeeded to the presidency but had never been elected to it. Davis was all over the map ideologically, and while he began his career as a conservative (supporting the “Red Raids” of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, for example), he took increasingly liberal, populist-sounding positions; as *The Saturday Evening Post* saw it at the time, he represented the “respectable medium” among Democrats. Curiously, Davis and Byrd both had political problems concerning their attitude toward the Ku Klux Klan, Davis for failing to denounce it with sufficient vigor, and Byrd for having been a member in his youth (“a 100 percent mistake,” he now acknowledges). “Fifty years have passed since West Virginia’s only major party candidate for President” was nominated, noted Representative Ken Hechler, a liberal downstate congressman, in a small-town newspaper column last year. Since Davis was from the north of West Virginia, Hechler said,

... the time for a good and strong candidate [for President] from the southern part of the state is now here. In recent years, Senator Byrd has broadened his base of appeal. There was once a time when only certain elements in the political spectrum would accord him enthusiastic support. Now he attracts supporters from all those who are tired of deviousness, dishonesty and deceit in politics and who yearn for a return to traditional virtues which are practiced instead of merely preached.

Byrd, for his own part, plays it cool and coy. “I feel that I can do any job that the American people wish to assign me. I would not reject the nomination, although I am not actively seeking it,” he says. He insists that he has no favorite in the field of declared and undeclared candidates, and, while he was lukewarm about George McGovern in 1972, sees nobody “among the current aspirants” whom he could not support or, for that matter, run with as a vice presidential candidate—including George Wallace of Alabama. He hopes for an open convention that will produce “a moderate ticket, not too far out in any direction.” And although he considers the prospects unlikely, he says it is “not inconceivable that the convention

could turn to me." He would be ready, and thinks that West Virginia law would permit him to run for re-election to the Senate and national office at the same time, just as Lyndon Johnson did in Texas in 1960.

Bobby Byrd no longer maintains a home in the state, and rarely even spends a night within its borders. Yet he is putting West Virginia, long the brunt of jokes, back on the map. The state has two fewer elected representatives in Washington now than it did fifteen years ago, but when one of them is Byrd, that hardly seems to matter. He is clearly West Virginia's favorite son, and traveling with him to his native state makes it easy to understand why.

As soon as the door of the Piedmont Airlines plane closes at Washington National Airport, Byrd is back in his element, among the people of West Virginia. "I feel good when I meet the people down here," he confides. "They're home folks. . . . They accept me, when I hug them or shake their hands." He does a lot of hugging and touching during his hectic one-day visits, whether in the aisles of the airplane, among a crowd at a shopping center, or with people he encounters in the street. His rule of procedure is simply stated: "I may not know them, but they know me. If they look at me, I stop and talk." The talk may be about arthritis, the price of gasoline, or the weather, but it hardly ever stops. He puts his arm around a young man washing the walls at the Kanawha County Airport in Charleston and huddles in a confidential conversation with him. He squeezes the shoulder of a policeman driving him to the airport in Huntington and asks, "How're you gettin' along in your work? Do you like your work?" A security guard shouts out, "Hey, Senator Byrd, will you have a spot in the Cabinet for me?" and the Senator beams knowingly. "Where're you from?" he asks a man who reaches out to him in the plane. "Oak Hill." "Oak Hill? Be sure to say hello to my friend Shirley Donnelly" (a minister). "Sure thing, Senator, I'll call him in the morning."

At the Parkersburg Rotary Club, a bastion of Republican conservatism in an area along the Ohio border where both parties are strong, Byrd talks about crime—or, as he is more inclined to pronounce it in West Virginia, "crahm." It is a tough law-and-order talk that could be straight out of the late 1960s:

I think the proliferation of crime all across our country can be largely attributed to one fact: there is so little punishment for it. Fewer and fewer criminals pay any penalty for crimes they commit. Retribution is so slow as to be almost nonexistent in an overwhelming majority of criminal situations. The old adage that crime does not pay is no longer true in case after case. . . . The best way—and perhaps

the only way—to halt the crime wave that has been getting worse and worse . . . is to lock up the criminals. . . . I say that it is better to build more prisons and hire more jailers than it is to allow American cities to deteriorate further into jungles in which no one is safe. It may not be popular to say so, but some people belong in jail, and the quicker we recognize that fact and put them there the better off our society will be.

"Bob shouldn't be talking like that," says one old friend of his privately after the meeting. "That stuff is easy, and everybody knows it. He should be talking about the great issues of the day—the energy crisis, the economy . . ." Those issues are the ones the reporters at the luncheon ask him about afterwards, and he gives his stock reply: that the Democrats in Congress have better answers than President Ford, and once given time to develop and pass their programs, they will show the country the way out of its problems. On the whole, the Rotary appearance is a happy one for the Senator. Only one thing nags at him: an old friend said, in his introduction, that Byrd has a 95 percent attendance record in the Senate: "actually it is just over 96 percent."

Byrd visits a real estate office that has pictures of him from the early days of his political career, and a photographic studio that is making new portraits of him for a museum soon to be started up in Parkersburg; then he embarks on a long drive to Huntington with Chester Airhart, the Democratic sheriff of Wood County, and his principal deputy for tax collection. Until his recent retirement and entry into politics, the sheriff was for many years the FBI resident agent in Parkersburg, and Byrd chats with him about how much crime has increased in the area—80 percent in a year. Airhart is proud of the county's newly opened "correctional center," but reinforces the Senator's view that "we haven't figured out any way to correct them yet." The deputy is a wizened character who, as Byrd notes later, "knows a little bit about West Virginia politics." The conversation focuses on the gubernatorial race in 1976 and the chances of Jay Rockefeller (John D. IV, the Democrat and adopted West Virginian in the Rockefeller family, who lost on his last try). The primary, potentially a divisive one, is another fight that Byrd will sit out, accepting the voters' verdict on who should join him on the Democratic ticket. He could accept Rockefeller, even though that ambitious young man was once found in the unfortunate situation of having contributed money to a Byrd opponent in the primary. (The Senator, who beat that opponent with 89 percent of the vote, says he doesn't even remember the man's name.)

In Huntington, Byrd joins in on-the-air festivities inaugurating a new transmission tower for WOWK-TV. He is in no mood for small talk with the station officials before the ceremony, and looks

The Man Who Runs the Senate

stiff and out of place in the midst of falling balloons as he pulls the switch to activate the new tower; but later he enjoys the taping of a half-hour "newsmaker" interview with two reporters, an easy, unaggressive encounter in which the Senator has plenty of opportunity both to play the statesman on national issues and to boast about all that he has done for West Virginia. He has no compunction about saying that he will "use whatever influence I can bring to bear," as chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee which approves the budget for the Department of the Interior, to have an experimental coal gasification plant located in the state.

Byrd's power base in West Virginia, like his position in Washington, is strictly a one-man operation. Whereas the state's other senator, Jennings Randolph, is the favorite of the United Mine Workers and other unions, and Republicans like Governor Arch Moore are entrenched with the state's business community, Byrd keeps his distance from both. "Bob Byrd's strength is in the people who come down from the hollows to vote for him. Some of them only vote when he is running," says his press secretary, John Guiniven. The resilience of that power base has never really been tested, because since he first entered Congress in 1952, Byrd has never faced a tough election fight.

En route to the airport for the flight back to Washington, Byrd lights up one of his favorite big fat cigars; but when there is no time to finish it, he stubs it out and slips what is left of it back into his briefcase. On the plane, he gives the stewardess his autograph and talks resignedly about how little power he feels the leaders of the Senate really have: "It's frustrating, you know. People expect too much . . . What power do I have? Or Mike Mansfield? We can have some input into legislative policy, but you're still just one senator, and there are ninety-nine others with their own ideas about how things ought to work . . . Now the President, he speaks for the executive branch; he has real power."

When Joseph R. Biden, Jr. was elected to the Senate from Delaware in 1972, and at thirty became the youngest member of that august body, he had a great deal of help from some prominent and established fellow Democrats. Statewide mailings went out from Washington, carrying the pictures and signatures of celebrities like Teddy Kennedy, Birch Bayh, and others, exhorting the voters to "send Joe Biden" down to join them. Some politicians spoke in Delaware on his behalf, and there was an appearance in the conservative area below the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal by one Robert C. Byrd. Barely six weeks after the election, Biden's wife and young daughter were killed in a traffic accident in Wilmington (his two

sons survived). Although the funeral was a small, private matter, a public memorial service was held in a suburban Catholic church, and Biden let it be known through an aide that he would welcome the attendance of any of his new colleagues who had helped him in the campaign and could break away from their holiday schedules. Only one came—Bobby Byrd. He drove up from Washington on a cold, miserable, rainy night and sat unobtrusively in the back row of the church. After the service, according to one man who observed the scene closely, Byrd stood in line for seventeen minutes for the opportunity to shake Biden's hand and say a few words of condolence. Then he left for the two-and-a-half-hour drive back to Washington.

When Biden came to Washington to interview people for his staff, he had the use of the Whip's ornate, chandeliered office in the Capitol. Along with Walter Huddleston of Kentucky and a few other members of that year's class of freshman Democratic senators, he was looked after by Byrd and treated to occasional homemade political science lectures, relating, among other things, that the Senate is made up of "work horses and show horses." Regardless of their political philosophies, Byrd treated them much the way the late Richard Russell of Georgia had once treated him (from his deathbed, Russell cast the proxy that won Byrd the whip's job in 1971), and once they became his protégés, they found it much easier to obtain extra office space and other amenities.

Was the Byrd who was so sensitive to Biden in time of tragedy, and beyond, the one who is often mocked for doing and saying the expedient thing in order to enhance his own power? Or the one who without fanfare sent the daughter of the owner of his favorite Chinese restaurant through college after her mother died? Or some of each?

Officially, Mike Mansfield still intends to run for re-election to the Senate in 1976, and to continue for at least another two years as majority leader. If he does not, there are those who say that Lloyd Bentsen of Texas might make a run, that Edmund Muskie of Maine, or Alan Cranston of California, could attract substantial liberal support, or that good old Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota might want to return to the leadership and the limelight. As far as Byrd is concerned, any one of these men could make a fine whip; but there is little doubt in his mind or that of anyone else who carefully counts votes in the Senate that he could beat all of them for the top spot with one hand tied behind his back. Even should Mansfield stay in the Senate, say the people behind the scenes, if a way could be found to guarantee him continued use of his limousine, he would gladly step down in Byrd's favor. The upstart from West Virginia is probably already working on a way to arrange that, just in case. □

SOME YOUNGER POETS

SOME YOUNGER POETS

Peter Cooley's book of poems, The Company of Strangers, will soon be published.

Celia Gilbert is Literary Editor of the Boston Phoenix.

Mark Lee has recently completed his first novel, The Informant.

Pat Lamorte lives and writes in Hartsdale, New York.

This is Marilyn Thompson's first appearance in The Atlantic.

COMPOSITION

by Peter Cooley

I have watched from this chair all afternoon
alone, while snow traces features of hills
I'd never noticed, watching the light fall,
get up, fall, pulling the dark after it.

No one is here. No one inhabits me
but my poem, images that stumble, rise
to take the air, refusing measure, lines
refusing breath. Tangible as angels.

The house is still, my wife & children gone
till dinner. No one. The quiet almost breaks
it is so fine, this paper always blank
where I sit, shaking, shaking words like bells
in the company of strangers, myself.

ROOM 635, WING B

by Celia Gilbert

Father lay in the crib.
His eyes struggled like moths to reach the light.
His nose tunneled the dark.

The curse of life lay on the children.
The curse of life lay on the wife.
They stood around the bed.

"Nurse, Nurse, get the Nurse . . ."

Liquid trickles from the mast;
a blood bag hangs at the feet.

"He was big enough to spank a little girl," his daughter says.
"He was big enough to eat up little boys," his sons report.
"His nice-nice was the world to me," stated his wife.

JIMMY BIGNELL'S
SONNET

by Mark Lee

The basket of my guts creaks down the stairs
These caulking days, don't require much these days
My stomach, lungs, all sold to some squeak doctor to obey
The rest propped like a kewpie on this chair
I swear to Christ I once had teeth to tear
The salt meat, nibble on the breasts along the way
Lost, all lost, for some slow reason, until my death plays
Like a cat beside the door; guess I should care
Where the next shipping's going to be
And pray to find a captain who's a gentleman
Like sailors' wives who blubber hymns for waveless seas
Remember riding Baja when a downward Santa Ana ran
And squeezed us in her arms until the winch rope snapped on free
I grabbed it, felt the singing in my hands

MILLIONAIRE
by Pat Lamorte

A cart goes by, carrying ice
To the house of the millionaire.

It stops in the souk.
The driver gulps a drink.

This is June, the longest, hottest,
Thirstiest month of the year.

The rich man's ice
Drips down on a hollow stone.

The cart moves off,
And all of us rush the stone.

I get there first, I lift the skirt
Of my jellaba, I sit down.

My comrades cheer,
They call me a millionaire.

Who put this dummy here, in place
of Father dear?

Room 635, Wing B.
The sky is a silent film.
The window a dead end; heat hisses
like a gas
pulling us into sleep . . .

*Quick, quick
fetch the basin, Father's sick.*

"He's so big
when he fell
one arm knocked a building down.
The Rockies were his pocket comb."

From the clouds, reproachful:
"Oh where were you? Why weren't you
here?"

"There, there,
there, there."

Uncovered, thin yellow legs.
Don't look,
Canaan was cursed.

Shh, outside the legend grows:
how prodigious the energy,
crayoned yellow sun with spiky crown.
Shh . . .

But what are we to do with this body?
The air leaking from it
is filling us up.

The pressure is intolerable;
we are ballooning
into grownups,
set to drift.

Two black queens
trundle you away—

rag doll, Thunderer,
leaf.

POEM FOR THE LEFT AND RIGHT HANDS

by Marilyn Thompson

The left hand trails in the water
The right is tying knots

The right stitches a seam
The left sleeps in the silk

The right eats
The left listens under the table

The right swears
The left wears the rings

The right wins, the right loses
The left holds the cards

And the left strikes chords while the right
runs, runs up and down, up and down

and when the right can't sleep and travels around the world against the clock
the left is buried.

Oh left hand, you're so quiet
Do you have children, a dog, mistresses, debts

It's the right that buys the groceries
drives the car
runs for high office
feeds the baby little silver spoonfuls
It's the right that grabs the knife
to hack off the left hand

The left hand waits
a blind dog

holding in its mouth
the right's glove

The knife falls, clatters
The left hand

is the right's
only chance

WHERE THERE'S A WELL. . .

A story by Mary Manning

Early last March a wealthy German industrialist, Gunther Krause, accompanied by John Fallon, the Irish millionaire building contractor, arrived in the small town of Kineely which is situated on the southeast coast between Ballyfungus and Fungusport. They came laden with plans for development of Balooly woods the pride and joy of the townland.

The news spread quickly and was received with horror and dismay except by those who hoped for employment. But nowhere was it received with more rage and consternation than by the ladies of Ferncourt, a small Victorian Gothic mansion on the edge of Balooly woods. Mabel (Lady Vigors) and Albina (Mrs. Traver) were sisters, and they were widows. Mabel's husband had been governor of what is now Zongo in East Africa and Albina's husband had been a fashionable Dublin doctor who had made a fortune in painless treatment of piles (hemorrhoids) and many were the coarse jokes on that subject (he made his pile). Their children were all married and living far away in distant lands, which didn't bother these ladies in the least. They lived very comfortably and seldom went out of doors except for an occasional lunch or bridge party. They were waited upon by an orphan, aged forty, called Betty Brady, who in spite of some mental retardation was an excellent cook. A handyman with one arm called Jamesy lived in the lodge, and was indeed far from handy; still it was nice to have a man around.

On this evening in March the ladies were expecting visitors. General Arthur Ironside (retd) who lived in a rackety ruin on the other side of Kineely and Doctor Josh Browne (retd) who re-

sided in the town with his son and daughter-in-law. Both of these cronies were widowed, which was delightfully convenient and they made a pleasant foursome for bridge twice weekly.

These four characters were around eighty years of age, the Doctor in fact was eighty-two, but they were on the whole, in excellent health. Their faculties were more or less unimpaired and they shared a great many prejudices in common which included progress, developments, foreigners, social upstarts, new inventions, abstract art, poetry that did not rhyme, sexual freedom, and nonconformist types of worship. Lady Vigors the elder was nearly six foot tall and her complexion was tanned and withered by the African sun. Her sister was not quite so tall, wore different colored wigs to suit her moods and was artistic. She painted watercolors, indoors, of chairs and tables and corner cupboards. The General was plump, sported a trim white moustache and was rather dandified. He played golf all day and in the evenings worked petit point: chair covers were his speciality. The Doctor was small pixieish and sloppy in his attire. Bird-watching with him had become a mania.

This historic evening Lady Vigors was wearing a black evening dress which she had purchased hurriedly in London (1935); her sister who kept up, or rather limped along with the times, was in a red pantsuit with wig to match.

"Artie," snapped Lady Vigors waving a jeweled yellow hand at the General; "Sit down; something has to be done."

"Done m'dear what has to be done?" The Gen-

eral seated himself in the chair beside her; he was noting with appreciation the crackling fire and the loaded drink tray alongside.

"That frightful Hun called on us. Krause. The brute who is developing Balooly."

"Balooly woods," shouted the Doctor; he was a great shouter; "marvelous birdlife there. By God, it's a sanctuary; he can't do it. Sacrilege." Though an unbeliever (he often said fifty years of general practice in the country left him no other alternative), he was very strong on sacrilege.

"Only man is vile," cried her ladyship passionately; "it's all over the world. Look what they're doing to my beloved Africa. Common persons, hooligans, driving around shooting the noble animals." She kissed the head of the aged bloodhound who was snoring asthmatically beside her. "You're a Christian Dolphie boy."

"He's better Mabs," said the Doctor quietly, "he's a dog. Yes, that fellow Krause in conjunction with Fallon is going to build a factory up in Balooly. The woods adjoin your property, don't they?"

"Yes, and when I think what Papa would have thought. Artie! Josh! What can we do? He's going to run a road through my parkland. I almost thought of joining the IRA, but then again I thought of Papa."

"The IRA"; exclaimed the General, "my dear Mabs! Frightful crowd. They only bomb pubs where people are enjoying themselves. Other people's pleasure seems to madden them."

"The indiscriminate shedding of blood has taken the place of religious worship. It's always other people's blood of course," said the Doctor thoughtfully; he sometimes read a book.

"But Artie, Josh, what can we do about this Krause and it's not only Krause, behind him are at least two other wretches, a Canadian miner and a dreadful little Jap. It's, what did he say it was Albina?"

"An international combine, *you* said he said."

"And of course that villain Johnny Fallon. I could murder him. The German says it's going to be a model town. In time he said you will see rising from what were woods, beautiful but non-functional woods, a busy town with supermarkets . . . Oh I can't go on."

"Nonfunctional, what is that?" asked the General.

"An outside privy," answered the Doctor.

"Papa sold Balooly to Paddy Goolden and Paddy Goolden sold it last month to Johnny Fallon at a huge profit, though Paddy doesn't really need the money, his nephew is busy robbing banks for the IRA and he *must* keep *some* of it." Albina who was less explosive than her sister rose

and stood by the drink trolley; "Whiskey Artie? whiskey Josh? Help yourselves." She poured herself a strong one.

"Nature sometimes wins when you least expect it," commented the Doctor thoughtfully. "Who knows Krause might die suddenly. Overwork, tension. Heart."

"Sudden death?" Lady Vigors sat up.

"We might drop a hint to the IRA," murmured Albina; "just a hint!"

"They wouldn't be interested," the Doctor warmed his hands at the fire; "useful constructive assassination is not in their line."

"Yes, but think Josh," cried Lady Vigors all animation, "it would set an example to other foreign speculators who come here to ravage our country. They'll think twice."

"Mabel," the General faced his hostess fair and square in the face, "are you suggesting murder?"

"Justified removal," said she quietly.

"Nothing justifies the taking of human life."

"Then you shouldn't have been a general," came quietly from Albina. "Even if you didn't take one personally you urged others to do it."

The General sat down; "You have me there Albie."

"You don't either of you," continued their dreadfully calm and resolute hostess, "have a leg to stand on. Josh, here, must have killed a lot of people in fifty years of a country practice."

"It's the ones I didn't kill I regret," said the Doctor, "I unfortunately brought that scoundrel Johnny Fallon into the world."

"Johnny's hand in glove, or rather pocket with Krause . . . You should have been here and heard the vile creature Krause. He's after Ferncourt; wants to sell us out. He told old Mick at the hotel that he'd make life impossible for us."

"What will we do?" pondered the Doctor thoughtfully gazing into his drink.

"Kill him," answered Lady Vigors without hesitation.

"I don't want to spend the last few years of my life in gaol"; the General rose and paced the room; "it's too high a price."

"We won't be found out." Albina had obviously been giving serious thought to the problem. "The way things are now everyone will think it's somebody else. And who in the world would suspect us? Our families have been here for centuries. Everyone loved Papa. We're above reproach—and suspicion."

"I think Albie's right." The Doctor faced them; "But how?"

"We'll ask him to dinner. He's dying to meet the county families. He told us he wants to keep horses, to hunt."

"What do we do then?"

"We dispose of him in such a manner that nobody will ever find the body."

"Wait a minute," the General sat down heavily; he needed another drink but hadn't the strength to get it; "how?"

"Poison," said Albina; she looked hard at the Doctor; "poison!" The Doctor started and returned the look; "Which Josh can get for us."

"What we need," said the General "is an incinerator."

"Which we don't have," snapped Lady Vigors.

"What we do have," said Albina, "is a well."

"A well?" The two men looked at her wonderingly.

"Yes, we have an unused and what is reputed to be a bottomless well in our equally unused stable-yard. There would be no trouble disposing of the body."

"Let me get this clear," the General might have been back at HQ where he spent most of World War II, pointing to strategic positions on a map. "You ask this man to dinner. You slip poison in his drink and then put his body down the well? How do you get rid of his car? How do you answer any questions as to who was the last to see him alive? Surely . . ."

Albie laughed gently; "It's so easy. The car will be driven by you Artie up to Balooly woods and there abandoned. There will be bloodstains in the car and a note from the IRA saying they're responsible. Josh can follow you in his car halfway and drive you back here."

"And what about Betty?" asked the General.

"Betty," Albina laughed and Lady Vigors smiled; "Nobody believes poor Betty. She's known to be half crazy."

"Brain damage. I delivered her," said the Doctor brazenly, "but we might give her a sedative to be on the safe side."

Albina rose and selected a small cheroot from the box on the writing table and lighted it; "never were the times more propitious for murder. Everyone will think it's political and of course it is. Krause is low-sized and quite thin. We need a stretcher."

"No problem," said the General quickly, "I can make one. Well that's that. Josh, the poison's up to you."

"We must move fast, faster than Krause," Lady Vigors consulted her calendar: "A week from today. What about the seventh. You two come at seven; gives us time to plan. I'll phone the beastly man tomorrow morning."

"Time for a rubber," Albie shuffled the cards suggestively.

"Too much on my mind," said the General frowning; "I'll take myself off. Josh you coming?"

"Oh yes. Certainly."

When they'd gone Lady Vigors stood up and poked the fire; "I hope they don't get cold feet. Trouble is Josh hasn't got much motivation."

"Yes he has. You know he's a mad bird watcher.

He's writing a book on golden eagles. And Balooly is a great bird place."

"But no golden eagles! They were exterminated long ago."

"He's using it as an example of what may happen to other birds."

"I see; of course you were always more in his confidence."

"You get down to bedrock when they're examining you—doctors I mean," said Albina quietly. "There's not an inch of my body that man doesn't know; it makes a bond."

"He's coming; he's coming." Lady Vigors was cosily in bed, her breakfast tray beside her and her mouth to the phone. "And I don't mean Our Lord. Krause is coming to dinner."

"I say," the Doctor chuckled. "Goodoh!"

"Did you get the stuff Josh?"

The Doctor hesitated; his phone was in the hall and his daughter-in-law was disturbingly inquisitive; "yes" he cupped his hands round the receiver; "yes, it's a new thing called Toegreen, used mainly for foot rot in sheep."

"Good God Josh! The man's not a sheep."

"Got it at the vets'. It's used as a spray but taken internally it's lethal. Tasteless colorless and instantaneous. He was telling me about it. Some wretched stableboy took it by mistake and died. I



snatched some while he was out looking at a barren mare."

"Good. Don't forget the pills for Brady." Lady Vigors called underlings by their surnames as if they had none other; it was a hangover from Colonialism.

"Betty? Yes, I'll bring them along too. How are things?"

"A lot of men have been up at Balooly. They were measuring and taking notes."

"That's as far as they'll get." The Doctor laughed again. "Bye for the present." Lady Vigors replaced the phone; "what will I give Krause for dinner," she pondered, "it seems such a waste when he's going to be . . . better get a nice leg of lamb, though," she giggled, "I suppose it should be a foot. Toegreen!" She laughed again. She couldn't wait to tell Albina.

The two fellow conspirators arrived punctually at seven. The drawing room was beautifully warm and comfortable. Both ladies wearing black as befitted the occasion. Albina in a curious tea gown with wig to match and Lady Vigors in a swinging bead outfit (1939 Nairobi) with a black feather boa. Dolphie was snoring away on the tigerskin rug, occasionally breaking wind.

"Where's the stretcher?" asked Albina anxiously.

"I left it in your hall cupboard. You don't usually bring a stretcher to a dinner party Albie unless you plan to be carried out dead drunk."

"That's true. Have you brought the er—potion Josh?"

The Doctor slowly removed from his pocket a small blue bottle marked Holy Water. "Aggie Feehan got several of these at Lourdes," he explained, "she presented me with a couple for treating her entrails. The stuff is in this. Who's looking after the drinks?"

"Artie," Lady V. pointed at the General, who winced, "he will actually administer the poison in the guest's after-dinner brandy. Come here darlings." She beckoned them over to the drink tray; "there are four snifters for us and one small brandy glass for him. No room for error. Now follow me. We also have four flashlights, on this bookcase"; they followed her as if being shown round a museum; "we'll need them to get to the well. That's going to be the trickiest part of it."

"Splendid." The General was greatly reassured everything was falling into place; "now are we all ready? Remember Josh we have to draw some blood from him. Have you brought your apparatus?" The Doctor pointed wordlessly to his old black bag which was placed beside his chair. "I say Mabel?" continued the General, "what condition is the well in."

"Very good or at least very bad. Twenty feet

deep and full of disgusting water. The cover is easy to remove. The nettles are the worst part of it."

"There's a car coming up the avenue, it must be he," cried Albie sneaking aside the curtains. "It is."

"Incidentally what does he drive?" asked the General.

"A Mercedes-Benz I believe. They all do."

"I just wanted to know if I have to drive the damn thing."

"What about a quick one Albie," suggested the Doctor nervously.

"Good idea," the General obligingly splashed out some strong drinks and they had hardly gulped them down before Betty flung open the door and announced; "Mr. Crust."

A small pale-faced man with a square clean-shaven face confronted them. He was wearing a tailored gray suit and exuded neatness cleanliness and after-shave lotion. His eyes were concealed behind square dark glasses. The company rose to greet him, including Dolphie who snarled and Lady Vigors graciously went through the introductions with much waving of the boa.

"Sherry, Herr Krause:" the General questioned him, "or maybe something stronger?"

"Sherry will be good." The visitor sat down; his English was perfect, almost BBC. He glanced at the table beside him on which was lying a page from Albina's sketchbook; "aha, someone paints around here?"

Albina removed it hastily; "so sorry. It's just a little study of the umbrella stand in the hall. Watercolors are my pastime."

Lady Vigors seated herself beside him; "my great-grandfather built this house in 1820. Our land used to include Balooly, it was a shooting preserve but Papa sold it in 1940 because of taxes."

There was an awkward silence while the visitor sipped his sherry. The Doctor and the General stared at him. They were both thinking the same thing. Weight? Could they manage the body physically? Their eyes, though they did not know it, were those of a butcher assessing a bullock. Suddenly a perfect fusillade of natural gas emanated from the noble bloodhound. Everyone started.

Herr Krause found his voice first; "very wet weather," he remarked "but never have I seen such greenness."

"Yes," answered the Doctor dryly; "Irish people are very green." At that point Betty put her head round the door and announced dinner, as if it were an invitation to a hanging, which in a sense it was.

"Mr. Krause follow me," Lady Vigors waved the boa at him. As they passed along the passage to

the dining room the guest had time to note many dim portraits of violent-looking military men.

"The wrong side of the blanket all of them," she murmured. The visitor bowed agreeably. He was totally at sea. "Very good," he murmured.

The dining room was large and very cold. "Too bad your wife is not here Mr. Krause," remarked the hostess as soon as they were seated.

"I return to Stuttgart every two weeks. Of course I won't bring the family here until we are settled and have a house. I brought some snapshots with me. You might care to see them after dinner."

"That will be very nice," Albina clinked her bracelets; "our children are all grown up and so are the grandchildren. Two of mine are in prison already." Krause stared: Could she be serious? She was.

"Personally I loathe children," said Lady Vigors, "always have." The General rose, not with alacrity. His arthritis was troubling him and also the Ferncourt wine was terrible. The Doctor used to say it was the vintage they used for gargling during the Black Death.

The dinner was good and the doomed man obviously enjoyed it. The retarded Betty instinctively was a first-rate cook the way some dim-witted persons are first-rate card players.

"I have not tasted such gourmet food since I came here," beamed Krause helping himself to blue Stilton. The two ladies tried to put thoughts of the Last Supper out of their minds while the gentlemen hoped he wasn't putting on too much weight.

"Tell us more about your plans Mr. Krause?" Albina leaned forward and moved a candlestick (George II 1750) out of the way, so that she could observe the villain in action as it were.

"My plans. *Our* plans rather. Ah they are very thorough. I plan in Balooly a model town around the works. About eight hundred houses. (The General emitted a low whistle.) These will, in time, enclose a square or rather park with playground for children and a swimming pool. The houses will by necessity be to one design and the amenities come later. In time of course we shall require more land. No more wine, thank you. In time" continued Krause all innocence, "with Johnny Fallon we plan a resort in the west, one thousand holiday chalets. We also plan, but this is secret, a restaurant—glass—suspended from the cliffs of Moher seven hundred feet above the sea."

Lady Vigors rose, one finger pressed to her forehead; it was her defense against vomiting. "We will take our coffee in the drawing room Brady."

Krause followed and as he followed he made a quick inventory of the pictures, furniture, and objets d'art; he intended purchasing cheaply—when the time came.

"Do show us the photographs of your dear wife and children?" pleaded Albina. "I adore looking at

photographs. Mine are *such* a chamber of horrors."

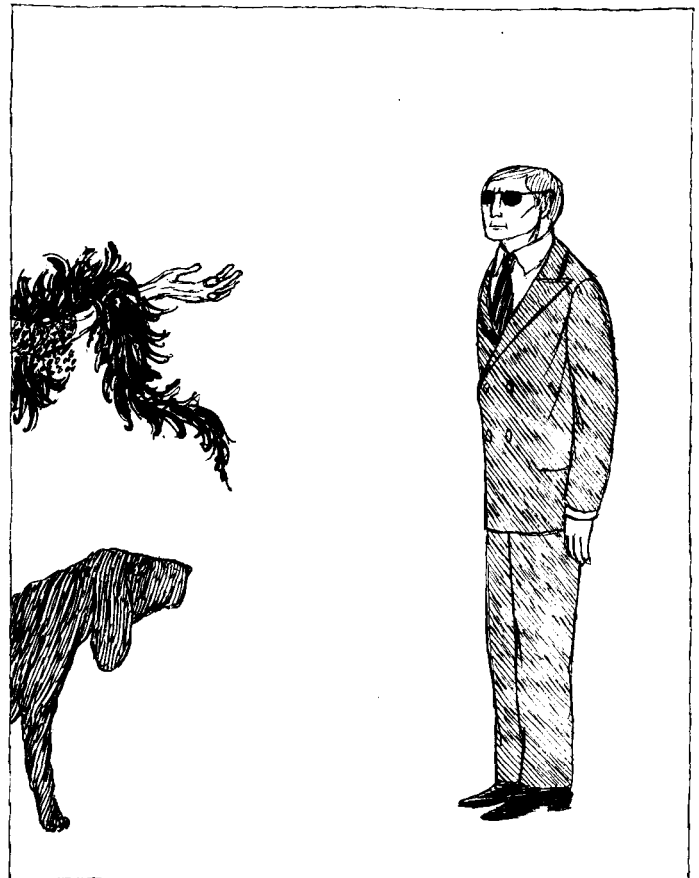
"Thank you. Two lumps please, no cream. That is my wife," he passed the photographs round. "She was an airline hostess when I met her. They are chosen for their beauty. That is my son. Fifteen. He will go to school here. His English is very good." He started and broke off. Albina was placing a cup of coffee beside the dog. Mad people, no doubt of that! He continued; "that is my daughter. She is twelve."

"Damn pretty girl," remarked the General, "some lucky Irish boy will grab her."

"He would dear sir have to be noble. I would not wish for her to be married—for her advantages." He smiled patronizingly. Poison's too good for him, thought the hostess, we should have killed him, slowly. Krause meanwhile had removed the dark glasses. His eyes were pale gray and as the Doctor noted with interest, red-rimmed like a vulture's.

Meanwhile the victim was studying those whom he considered his victims with particular regard to their health and longevity. He was discouraged on the whole. They are all four depressingly alert, vigorous, and on their toes. At the moment they were standing in the path of progress, but time was on his side and everyone can be bought. People seemed extraordinarily easy to buy in Ireland.

"What I would wish to discuss in a friendly



manner," Krause finished off his coffee, "is the road. The road to Balooly, the new road will I fear have to go through your property."

Lady Vigors rose; "No, no, pleasure before business. Artie dear *you* take care of the brandy." The two old men made their way to the drinks and Albie poked the fire. Dolphie as if scenting blood already sniffed horribly and growled. "And now," continued her ladyship joining the men at the bar, "now I will take Brady her little glass of sherry. We allow her this little treat while she is washing the dishes." At this point Krause alarmed them by rising and making a gesture as if to get his own brandy, but he was restrained in a peremptory manner by his hostess; "No, no you are the guest." She vanished.

"Your brandy sir," the General courteously placed the small glass beside the visitor. He drained his own down remarkably fast.

Lady Vigors returned from the kitchen, the feather boa in full action. "Betty is doing very well," she announced smiling at the Doctor.

The General in order to steady his nerves had taken out his petit point and was beginning to work on a new chair cover. A general *and* a seamstress! The visitor couldn't believe his eyes. He lifted the brandy glass to his lips, while everyone watched him, then put it down again.

"Your health Mr. Krause," Albina lifted her glass and smiled at him "and success to your undertakings."

The doomed man rose to his feet, clicked his heels, raised his glass; "Your very good health dear ladies," he took a large sip, sat down and took another sip. There was an audible sigh of relief. The moment had come. The Doctor blatantly pulled a chair over beside Krause and began staring at him intently. Meanwhile the company seemed to take on a sinister air; the room was so dimly lighted and even the fire had died down. The bloodhound rose slowly from the tigerskin and looked at Krause, saliva dripping from his jowls. Those eyes! Krause shuddered. Bloodshot, and Mein Gott, they are crooked; they are crossed. Surely an evil portent? The cold was beginning to creep up around his feet. He hastily finished the brandy and then everything seemed madly funny. He laughed, it was the last laugh. Suddenly his whole body stiffened, he fell sideways in the chair.

The Doctor darted forward. Assisted by the General he tried to raise Herr Krause. He pulled and tugged to no avail. The man had stiffened into a piece of sculptured iron.

The Doctor removed his coat and rolled up his shirtsleeves; "hand me my black bag Albie." As he worked he talked, everyone else tried to think about beautiful things; "better draw the blood, no time to lose. As you said the other

night Artie we've nothing to lose. Just a few years in gaol, taken care of by the State. As for disgrace, forget it. There's no disgrace in murdering people anymore. It's all done from the highest motives, the highest of course being liberation of someone or something. Ours is for preservation. Preservation of Nature? Preservation of privacy, and preservation ultimately of the goddamn planet. I'm doing it for the birds. I lost my faith in humanity fifty years ago." He handed the General another of the blue Lourdes bottles; "here's the blood. Aha, the Toegreen is working." Suddenly the body loosened up, rolled off the chair and onto the floor; "That's better, boy! Now get the stretcher Artie. By the way search his pockets Mabel old girl, we need his car keys. Everything else goes down the well with him." Shudderingly Lady Vigors obeyed, in silence she handed the keys to the General who had returned with the stretcher.

"Nice piece of work," he remarked happily; "I had to do it at night in case my housekeeper asked questions."

Snorting, gasping and cursing (never had the ladies heard such language) they loaded the body onto the stretcher and the slow funeral procession made its way to the underworld. The ladies carried the flashlights. As they passed the kitchen door they caught sight of Betty seated in the kitchen stupefied, but not unconscious.

"You didn't give her enough," groaned the Doctor, "she's a witness. We'll have to put her down too."

There was a muffled scream from the ladies; "no, no, no," cried Lady Vigors, "we'll never get another cook. We'll have to risk it. Besides she's in a sort of torpor." She smacked Betty sharply on the side of her head. There was no reaction; "see."

At last they reached the well. It was a pitch black night, a light rain was falling and things were oozing all round them. Albina twice screamed bats and Lady Vigors lost a shoe. They put the stretcher down and the General raised the lid of the well. The Doctor flashed the lights and they all peered down and saw nothing but blackness. The General dropped a stone and far, far below they heard it splash. The body was then hoisted off the stretcher and thrown head first down the well. There was a bloodcurdling splash; the General hastily replaced the lid.

Lady Vigors lifted her hand in benediction; they all bent their heads. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding be with you now Gunther Krause and forever more."

"Amen," they all murmured.

"That was a nice thought Mabs," observed the General greatly moved.

"He'll have a development going up there in no time," remarked the Doctor cynically; "what about a hot cup of tea?" Indeed they were all shivering.

The General stopped suddenly one foot in a

puddle; "a thought crossed my mind. What about Jamesy? Doesn't he work around the yard? Doesn't he know about the goddamn well?"

"Darling Artie," whispered Albina reassuringly; "he doesn't know about anything. He just brings in the wood and polishes the brasses and has his dinner with Betty."

"Good God what does he do all day?"

"He's reading *The Decline and Fall*, he always wanted to be a professor of something."

Thankfully they entered the house. Betty was sitting exactly where they had left her. Except that occasionally she emitted a sort of whinnying sound.

"What was in that pill?" asked Albina curiously.

"Don't really know. I had a lot of them mixed up in my pocket."

"Artie, what on earth are you doing," asked Lady Vigors crossly. The General was taking off his shoes and replacing them with a pair of old plaid bedroom slippers.

"Footprints. They'll be looking for footprints. I'll burn these old shoes when I get back. You haven't forgotten I have to drive the bloody fellow's car up into the woods. Josh, you follow me in your car as far as Cashin's bridge. Wait for me there." He slowly drew on a pair of white cotton gloves the type clowns wear. "Bring the blood along Josh. Oh Mabel have you got our message ready?"

Lady Vigors blushing like a girl simperingly held up a square piece of white cardboard on which was written;

WARNING TO FOREIGNERS
THIS LAND BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE
SIGNED; FIRST BLOOD '75

"It took me ages," she said; "but it's rather sweet. And first blood is so threatening. A warning of more to come."

"Absolutely brilliant," exclaimed the General and he was echoed by the others. "Well we're off. Come Josh."

"We'll have tea for you on your return," Albina called after them. She hurried to the window and peeped between the curtains; "he's having trouble starting up the car. Ah there he goes and Josh following him."

Half an hour passed; it was like a lifetime. At last their vigil was broken by what seemed like the clattering of hooves. The door opened without the heralding respectful knock and Betty entered at full gallop with the tea tray. She came to a full stop in front of Lady Vigors and stood there snorting and tossing her gray locks.

"Oh Missis, Oh me Lady! Oh the things that I did be seein! Oh you wouldn't believe . . ." another whinny followed.

"I certainly wouldn't believe anything *you* said Brady," said her mistress coldly; "put the tray down Brady and compose yourself." But Betty could not be quenched; she was in full spate. "I fell asleep like with the dish towel in me hand standin' up, and I seen true as God, four terrible lookin' creatures pass the door with a dead man on a stretcher and Madam me Lady they never did come back."

Albina laughed merrily and Lady Vigors snapped; "really Brady, this is going too far. I'll have to have the head doctor to see you."

"There's nothin in me head ma'am, me Lady," said Betty piteously.

"That's the trouble Brady I'm afraid. Go downstairs now and finish the dishes. Look at the time."

"I seen what I seen," neighed Betty as she galloped out.

"Thank God, here is Josh's car," cried Albina, who was as usual like sister Anne at the window. "Mabs, I think Betty thinks she's a horse!"

The General entered first carrying the bedroom slippers in one hand. He removed the cotton gloves and sank into a chair; "Albie be an angel and throw those confounded slippers in the fire." Albina obeyed him and the fire blazed up merrily; "mission accomplished," the warrior continued; "the Mercedes is now in the woods blood-bespattered and I left your note Mabs on the front seat. My heart was in my mouth that I'd run into an-



other car. It's a lovers lane up there you know, but thank God owing to Lent you know—no love. Give me a dash of whiskey sweets, I'm feeling my age."

The General kissed Albina's hand; "bless you. Remember everyone, we all tell the same story. Krause left us at nine-thirty to drive back to his hotel. We know nothing more. Nothing. I'll leave the stretcher in your closet if you don't mind. I can pick it up later."

The Doctor rose stiffly to his feet; "I've got to get home or my damnable daughter-in-law will be asking questions. Everything worked perfectly ladies. You've every reason to be proud of yourselves."

"Just a minute Josh," Lady Vigors stopped him; "just what did you give Betty, or what did you give *me* to give Betty."

"She's behaving so oddly," Albina echoed her sister; "she came in here just like a mad horse. Neighing and tossing her mane."

"As a matter of fact I realize now there was a little mix-up in those pills. It was a snitch of something they give barren mares to bring them into heat. She may gallop round a while tonight, looking for a mate, but it will pass."

"Josh, how could you? Why *don't* you stay away from the vet. And now you see she wasn't unconscious; she did see everything."

"No she had a sedative too, something they give restive cows. Don't worry. Come Artie. Home, sweet, home."

The mysterious disappearance of the wealthy German industrialist, who was going to do so much for Ireland, evoked a hue and cry which rivaled the Donoughmore abduction and the robbery of the Beit pictures.

A week after the event the sisters had a visit from two Special Branch men. They were a couple of hard-faced middle-aged men very well dressed and they had eyes that Betty said afterwards, went right through you and out the side, like bullets. She showed them in to the drawing room salivating with excitement, a symptom she shared with Dolphie.

Lady Vigors motioned them to sit down and Albina asked them if they would care for a glass of sherry which they declined.

"I've already told the local Sergeant, such a dear man, that Mr. Krause came to dinner and left at nine-thirty. He said he had to get back early in order to finish some work."

"Did he seem in good spirits?" asked the bigger and more intimidating of the interrogators.

"Oh very," Lady Vigors smiled reminiscently; "he showed us pictures of his wife and children, poor fellow; he was full of plans for the future."

"Yes," Albina took up the tale; "he seemed very happy about coming here to live and all the beau-

tiful things he was going to do for us. Who do you think could have done such a horrid thing? I see by the newspapers that Palestine Liberation, Death Squad '75, Sheer Terror, the Furies, and the IRA have all disclaimed responsibility."

"Would you say—did he drink much—indulge you might say?" asked the smaller man.

Both ladies hooted with laughter; "gracious no," cried Lady Vigors "he had one glass of sherry before dinner, half a glass of wine and a teeny drop of brandy afterwards with his coffee. Sober as a judge." Albina leaned forward eagerly, "do you think they'll ever find the body?"

The big detective shook his head; "the way things are going now he might turn up in Libya; it's all International now. Well good day to you; we won't take up any more of your time." Obviously there was nothing to be gained by further interrogation, the two ladies radiated well-bred innocence.

Three months passed; it was coming up to summer and poor Krause, such is human nature, was almost forgotten though the search for the body still continued in a perfunctory manner. Largely owing to the instigation of Lady Vigors, an ecumenical memorial service was held in the parish Church of Ireland. Frau Krause notified them she was too grief-stricken to attend and also too frightened which was understandable.

Prominent among the mourners at the memorial service were Dr. Josh Browne and General Arthur Ironside both wearing dark suits and black ties. Mrs. Flanagan the butcher's wife, who was artistic, had arranged the flowers and most of the village attended, also John Fallon who drove down from Dublin for the ceremony. Lady Vigors and her sister had chosen the hymns, a rather ominous one beginning, "Christian seek not yet repose, hear thy Guardian Angel, say, thou art in the midst of foes. Watch and Pray." And the last was "Lift Thy Banner Church of Erin, to thine ancient faith we cling." Nobody there was quite sure which ancient faith they were clinging to, but it was ecumenical which made it all right. The Rector, a man of unconquerable cheer who knew nothing that he liked about the late Krause delivered a short insincere eulogy and Father Moloney lamented the passing of a man who was going to do so much for Kineely. Then they all filed out in the summer sunshine to the sound of Chopin's funeral march (recorded): not for years had they been able to afford an organ let alone an organist.

Lady Vigors stood outside and shook hands with the mourners as they filed past. The three other assassins hovered respectfully in the background.

"Sorry I can't go back to Ferncourt," said Johnny Fallon, "nice of you to ask me but I'm due in New York tomorrow. You know we've aban-

doned all plans for the Balooly development. We're pulling out."

"How sad. But sensible. Such ruthless determined people would surely act again."

"That's what I'm thinking. I don't mind the IRA so much, it's a home product, but these new international killers are something else. Good day to you." He stepped into the chauffeur-driven Rolls and disappeared in a cloud of rich dust.

"We should have put him down," Lady Vigors whispered in the General's ear; "after all he's the one who sells the land to foreigners. We might have a try."

The General shuddered; "He's too heavy."

When they arrived back at Ferncourt a dreadful and alarming sight met their eyes. No less than two Garda cars, an evil-looking black van, and two more official vehicles were drawn up in front of the house.

"What can this be?" cried Lady Vigors. She was followed into the house by her sister; the General and the Doctor bringing up the rear. In the drawing room where the funeral baked meats were so tastefully arranged and awaiting the guests, were the two Special Branch men several Gardai and a couple of other official characters. Betty and Jamesy white-faced and trembling were holding on to Dolphie.

"What does this mean?" demanded Lady Vigors every inch the governor's wife, "speak boy."

One of the Special Branch stepped forward; "We were searching all ponds and wells in the neighborhood my Lady and we did yours as a matter of routine. I'm sorry to say we recovered the body of the late Mr. Krause in your well."

"So we would appreciate it, if all four of you, because the gentlemen were also present that evening, would accompany us to the station and assist us with our inquiries."

"Better go Mabs," whispered the General; "the game's up."

"Tell them," said Lady Vigors and who "them" was, nobody knows to this day; "that I died for Ireland." She stopped in front of the Special Branch men, "and *you*, if *you'd* been patriots you would have left well alone." She had the last word.

Nobody died for Ireland; nobody does anymore except innocent bystanders. The verdict was guilty but of unsound mind. The four assassins were removed to a comfortable unisex mental hospital just outside Dublin. They are still there. I had tea with them yesterday. The Doctor is writing his book on Lost Birds; Albina is painting stone arrangements, and the General's petit point is the admiration of all. I heard the whole story from Lady Vigors; "I feel no remorse dear, none. I only wish we could have stuffed Johnny Fallon down the well. He's worse than any of them. He sells the land to the foreigners. No dear, if the opportunity arose I'd do it again." □

COSA NOSTRADAMUS



by Felicia Lamport

Which country will be next to go
In the current *anno domini*?

PRIDE OF THE TIGER

A memoir

by Robert Lipsyte

A sportswriter and a middleweight boxing champion from Nigeria rediscover the meaning of human dignity.

The first time I saw Dick Tiger he was waiting for me in front of the old Madison Square Garden, a homburg perched on top of his head. The homburg was much too small, and I thought he looked comical. It was years before I learned that he always bought his hats a size too small, so he could share them with his brothers back home in Nigeria.

I introduced myself to Tiger and he shook my hand gravely. Then he turned and began moving down Eighth Avenue on the balls of his feet, like a big black cat. His manager and I followed.

"Nigerian fighters are very good, very tough," said his manager. "They're closer to the jungle."

Over his shoulder, Tiger said, "There is no jungle in Nigeria."

"It's just an expression, Dick, just a figure of speech," said the manager. "I mean they're hungry fighters."

Tiger stopped. "Hungry fighters." He winked at me. "We eat hoo-mon bee-inks. Medium rare."

We walked a mile and a half to the gym where he was training because Tiger would not consider a cab, even if I paid. It was said around town that Tiger had the terminal cheaps. I followed him into a dressing room and watched him shed the comedy of his clothes. As the homburg, the brown sports jacket, the blue tie and white shirt disappeared into a rusty metal locker, Tiger seemed to grow larger. The blue tribal tattoos across his chest and back rippled over knotty muscle. He seemed suddenly savage, dangerous.

But there was only gentleness in his eyes, and humor twitched at the corners of his wide mouth. I watched him tape his hands slowly and with great care, first winding the dirty gray bandages around

and around, then placing the sponge across the knuckles, then wrapping on the adhesive. I asked him why he didn't have his manager or trainer perform this daily chore, now that he was middleweight champion of the world.

"I am a travelin' man, and I got to do things myself, a fighter should know these things," he said. "This is my business. I don't want to spoil myself for someday when there is no one around to help me."

He was thirty-four years old at the time, and had been champion for less than a year. He was training in New York, where facilities and sparring partners were the best, for the second defense of that championship, to be held in Ibadan, Nigeria. Tiger was taking this fight very seriously. It would be Nigeria's first world title fight, and his own real homecoming. "It is very important I win," he said. "For pride. They receive me different, people, when I am champion."

This was June, 1963, and I had interviewed few fighters. I watched Tiger work out for two hours, methodically, intensely, oblivious of sound and movement around him. Great silver globules of sweat formed, swelled, exploded on his forehead, and he never wiped them away. He weighed about 160 pounds then, and his 5'8" body was unusually hard and fit. His calisthenics were so violent that they seemed beyond human tolerance; I was sure his eyes would pop out of his head as he twisted his neck, that his muscles and veins would burst through his skin.

We talked again after he was finished. His voice was softer now, his body more relaxed. He had been born in Amaigbo, a remote eastern Nigerian town in the rain forests of the Binin River delta, a town that appeared on few maps. He was raised on a farm and educated in English and Ibo at an Anglican mission school. At nineteen he went to the city of Aba to work in his brother's grocery store. At a local boys' club he learned to box.

He had been christened Richard Ihetu, Ibo for "what I want," but assumed the ring name Dick

Tiger for his early pro fights against the likes of Easy Dynamite and Super Human Power. He kept the name when a British promoter brought him to England to fight on the Blackpool-Liverpool circuit. He was lonely and chilled in the dank foreign gyms, and he lost his first four fights. Letters from his family in Nigeria were beseeching him to give up the foolishness and return to his father's farm or his brother's grocery store. Tiger gave himself one more chance. In his fifth fight, he knocked out a Liverpool boy in ninety seconds, and Richard Ihetu, farmer and clerk, disappeared forever.

He first came to America in 1959, and lived with his pregnant wife in third-rate Manhattan hotels, cooking meals on a hot plate and running in Central Park. He slowly gained a reputation among boxing promoters as an honest workman. He was always in top condition, he always gave his best. He would never be spectacular, he did not have a great deal of boxing finesse or personal "color," but he was dependable and tough. His wife gave birth to twins, then to a third child in 1960. Tiger sent her back to Nigeria and began commuting between New York and Aba. Now he lived in fourth-rate hotels, walked whenever possible, window-shopped for entertainment, sent every penny home. After he won the title in 1962, he was able to send more money home, but he did not improve the quality of his living conditions or his clothing. I asked him if he was saving his money for something special.

"This will not always be my business. I want money," he said, rubbing his fingers together. "Six hundred thousand to start a big business. Now all I have is a house and a Peugeot, that is all."

We left the gym together and took the subway uptown. We made small talk on the ride, and he told me the only tiger he had ever seen was in a cage in the Liverpool zoo. My stop came first. I got off the train, and looked back at him through the window. In his clothes again, he was just a chunky man in a too-small homburg, hanging from an overhead strap, jostled by a rush-hour crowd.

I went back to the office and wrote a tidy Sunday feature story, my specialty. A month later, I read that he had won his bout in Ibadan. I was glad of that; something about Tiger had touched me.

In December of that year, 1963, he defended his title against Joey Giardello in Atlantic City. It was my first championship fight, and my notes were unusually voluminous, including the first stanza of the Nigerian anthem, which was played before the fight began.

Robert Lipsyte, once a sports columnist for the New York Times, is now a free-lance writer. This material is adapted from his forthcoming book, *SportsWorld / An American Dreamland*.

"Nigeria, we hail thee,
Our own dear native land.
Though tribe and tongue may differ
In brotherhood we stand."

Tiger lost the fifteen-round fight by a decision. I knew he would be very upset. He had become a national hero in Nigeria: he had been awarded a medal, Member of the British Empire, in Lagos, and he was amassing property in Aba. In a few days he would be returning home a loser.

But the next morning he smiled at me and said amiably, "Look at my face. I don't look like I was in a fight last night. I did a bit of dancing last night with Giardello, and I am a fighter, not a dancer. I thought I did enough to win, as he kept running away."

He shrugged and sighed. "These days you get a title by running away."

We shook hands gravely and said good-bye. I would have liked to tell him that I was sorry he had lost, but the words stuck in my throat. It seemed somehow unprofessional, and Tiger was a professional.

Giardello promised Tiger a rematch within six months, but it was two years before they met again. Giardello enjoyed his championship hugely and did nothing to endanger it, like fighting someone who might take it away. Tiger, meanwhile, waited patiently and rarely fought: his reputation as a head-down, hands-up, straight-ahead slugger who plodded into his opponent and beat away scared off anyone who didn't need to fight him for a payday or a shot at the title.

By the time they met again I was a regular boxing writer, veteran of the Clay-Liston spectacles, a seasoned observer who almost knew A. J. Liebling's *The Sweet Science* by heart. I even kept my own scorecard, which usually conflicted with the judges'. I was also a great deal more appreciative of Dick Tiger, now that I had interviewed many other boxers and watched them train and fight. Of all athletes, boxers are generally the friendliest and the most dedicated, and Tiger had the most heart and soul of them all.

I liked Joey Giardello, but I was secretly rooting for Tiger to win back his title the night of the rematch in Madison Square Garden. Tiger was shorter and lighter and older than Giardello, but from the opening bell, when a Nigerian *etulago* set a thumping drumbeat, Tiger doggedly followed Giardello around the ring, pressing and battering and slugging. Giardello stayed on his feet as a point of pride. At the start of the fifteenth and last round, with the decision certain for Tiger, Giardello leaned forward and whispered, "Nice fight."

Tiger did not hold the title very long this time, either. He was over thirty-six years old, and the strain of keeping his weight below the 160-pound middleweight limit sapped his strength. Emile

Griffith, the welterweight champion, who could no longer keep his weight below 147 pounds, moved up in class and beat him. So, logically, Tiger decided to move up in class, too. In the winter of 1966 he beat the brilliant but erratic Jose Torres and became light heavyweight champion. The morning after that fight I visited his shabby hotel room. He greeted me with the same amiable, win-or-lose smile.

"The people all said that Tiger is finished, that he looks a hundred years old, and now they come around to pat my head and tell me I'm a good boy." He shrugged. "That's life."

His investments in Nigeria were doing well, he told me, although he was concerned by the mounting violence and political instability. Many thousands of his fellow Ibo tribesmen had been slaughtered in pogroms in northern Nigeria. The Ibo, who were Christians, were civil servants and small businessmen in the Moslem north. Ibo were fleeing back to their native lands in eastern Nigeria. Tiger's holdings were in Aba, in the eastern region, where he lived in a large, air-conditioned home, owned several buildings, operated several businesses and shops, and had a chauffeur for his Mercedes-Benz limousine. He was still optimistic about the future of his six children and the many nieces and nephews that he took pride and joy in supporting.

Tiger fought Torres again the following spring, as usual giving away height and weight and age, and he beat him again. This time, when the decision was announced, fights broke out in the balcony and bottles of wine and rum smashed on the Garden floor and sprayed the crowd with shards of glass. There was blood and there were a number of injuries. I wrote most of my story crouched under the Garden ring, with my typewriter on my knees. The incident was discussed and written about for several days, and then dismissed as one of those cultural-ethnic-economic-sporting inevitabilities. Garden officials blamed "a few nuts or hoodlums" who wanted to read about themselves in the papers. Torres said he was proud of his fellow Puerto Ricans for showing their "support" of him, and Lipsyte analyzed the random violence as an expression of the class struggle. The boxing commissioner declared: "A hundred years ago Charles Dickens went to a fight with William Makepeace Thackeray and wrote about a riot in London."

It was an ironic send-off for Tiger, who flew back home into the Nigerian civil war.

The next time I saw him, in March of 1968, the smile was gone. His mouth was twisted, his voice high and tense. His square hands plucked at his baggy gray suit pants.

"I used to be a happy man, but now I have seen something I have never seen before. I read about

killing and war, but I had never seen such things. Now, I have seen massacres."

He bounded from the straight-backed hotel chair and began fishing in his bureau drawers, through pamphlets and books and newspaper clippings. "Ah, here," he said, almost reverentially opening tissue paper. "This is Aba." He spread the photographs on the bed.

"The hospital. There were eight patients and a doctor when the planes came and threw bombs around. Hired pilots. The Nigerians can't fly planes. They are a thousand years behind civilization, that is why they are doing everything wrong."

"The open market, look at that. In that corner, that is a hand. A little girl's hand. What does she know of war? This woman burned. These men dead, not even soldiers. This is a woman, too. No, it is not rags, it was a woman."

He carefully repacked the photographs, and sat down again. "The Nigerian radio says Dick Tiger of Nigeria will defend his light heavyweight championship against Bob Foster in Madison Square Garden on May 24. Dick Tiger of Nigeria. They still claim me and they would kill me, they want to kill us all. I am a Biafran. And we just want to live."

I asked him about his family, which now included seven children. He said he had moved them back to Amaigbo while he tended his businesses in Aba. "I do not worry so much anymore. The children have learned to take cover quickly when they hear the planes. It is the fighter planes we worry about. The bombs fall slowly. If you see them you can run away. But you never see the bullets."

Foster knocked him cold in the fourth round of the fight. Tiger went straight down, his head smacked the canvas sickeningly. He twitched on his back like a turtle on its shell. He had to be helped up. In his dressing room he managed a smile at the crowd, which included various countrymen, boxing buffs, and Giardello. "Since I been winning I never had my fans stay in my dressing room so long. Now, I'm a loser and everybody's here. I guess I am a good man."

He left the United States without his light heavyweight title, but with enough currency to buy a planeload of tinned meat and powdered milk in Lisbon and fly it into Biafra.

In the summer of 1968 there were reports of 6000 Ibos a day dying of malnutrition and disease and wounds. Occasionally we would hear that Tiger was dead, too. And sometimes we would hear that he was hiding out in Brooklyn.

He reappeared in September to fight an upcoming young light heavyweight, Frankie DePaula.

I visited him in training. I was completing my first year as a columnist, and I had tried to stay away from boxing, to break the identification and establish my credentials in other sports. But Tiger

had become a touchstone for me; I think I derived some symbolic nourishment from watching him tape his own hands. The honest, independent workman, a man of dignity and courage.

"If I had been a flashy fellow," he told me, "with fancy clothes and many women and big cars and nightclubs every night, I would have trouble. But I have never been a flashy fellow; I eat what is there to eat, I just dress, you know . . ."

"And still you have nothing now."

"This is true. I saved all my money and brought it home. I had apartment buildings in Lagos and Port Harcourt and Aba, and a movie and factories and shops and now, with the shelling, I guess it is all gone. Everything I have saved. But I am not sorry. If I had been a flashy fellow when I had lots of money, what would I do with myself now?"

He was training in the evening because he could no longer afford professional sparring partners; he sparred against dockers coming off work. He spent his days at the Biafra Mission, reading cables and dispatches. He disputed reports in American newspapers that the Nigerians were in complete control of almost all the cities.

"In every city they are still fighting," he said. "The Biafran fights to the end; the Nigerian will kill him anyway. The plan is to kill every Biafran over two years old. Then all the children will pray to the sun and moon instead of God, and never know who their fathers were. That is why we fight to survive."

We walked out of the dressing room to the training ring. In the hallway, a schoolboy caught his own reflection in the mirror of a vending machine, and jabbed at it.

Tiger smiled. "When I was young, if I ever saw my shadow I had to fight it, I always boxed at mirrors. No more. I am just one old man."

He was thirty-nine, and he looked even older in his fight with DePaula. Tiger won, but in the late rounds he seemed to be melting like a candle.

He took his money and disappeared again.

I didn't see him for more than a year: my second year as a columnist, and probably the most interesting. The Mexico City Olympics. The Jets Super Bowl. The Aqueduct Boycott. The Mets World Series. The start of the Knicks' first championship season.

The rehabilitation of Muhammad Ali began: liberals discovered that his antiwar stand was compatible with theirs, even if his racial views were not, and sprang to defend his constitutional rights. Together they would prove that the American legal system worked perfectly for anyone with the money and the power to go all the way.

I began to wish I had more time to think and



From the top: Tiger wrapping his hands; in the rematch with Giardello; the match against Andy Kendall; after his victory over Torres

read and talk to people, to stop writing so much and with such assurance. Columnists have to write with assurance because they are paid to raise The Truth. As that second year slipped into a third year, as the column became progressively easier to write, as my work brought me greater access to people I wanted to talk with, I found I was less and less sure of what I knew absolutely. Was I growing wiser, losing my nerve, taking myself too seriously, getting bored? Was I over the hill, choking in the clutch, hearing footsteps, getting fat?

In November of 1969, Tiger sluggishly won a dreary decision over a light heavyweight no one had heard of before, or would hear of again. A victory that had meaning only when translated into milk and salt and meat. On December 5 we sat down at a table in a publicity office of the Garden to discuss a matter that had suddenly become very urgent to Tiger. The medal he had received in Lagos in 1963 had grown too heavy in his mind to keep. When he read that John Lennon had returned his M.B.E. award for reasons that included Britain's involvement in the Nigerian civil war, Tiger decided to mail back his medal, too. But he needed help with the accompanying letter. Garden officials had not wanted to become involved in his protest, and had called Dave Anderson, then covering boxing for the *New York Times*. Dave called me. I had misgivings. I had always been contemptuous of sportswriters who acted as go-betweens for professional clubs and city governments, for high school athletes and college recruiters, for out-of-work coaches and potential employers. They were no longer honest journalists, I thought, they could no longer be trusted by their readers. They were supposed to cover stories, not make them happen.

But I had known and written about Tiger for more than six years; he had always been cooperative and friendly. I would be his amanuensis, no more: not a single idea or even word of mine would slip into the letter; it would make a good column for my readers, my kind of column, a famous athlete taking a principled stand on a headline issue that transcended sports. I didn't think, This is a very important cause, life, freedom, justice, I should be involved and make a worthwhile contribution as a human being. In those days I thought being an honest journalist was enough.

We wrote the letter and addressed it to the British Ambassador, Washington, D.C.

"I am hereby returning the M.B.E. because every time I look at it I think of millions of men, women and children who died and are still dying in Biafra because of the arms and ammunition the British Government is sending to Nigeria and its continued moral support of this genocidal war against the people of Biafra."

He signed it "Dick Tiger Ihetu."

We walked across Eighth Avenue in the brilliant, chilly afternoon, and up the post office steps. Tiger said, "If they ask me how much it's worth, what should I say?"

I shrugged. "We should try to pawn it and find out."

"I'll say a million dollars." Tiger laughed for the first time. "I'll say fifty or a hundred, just so it gets there."

The clerk behind the registry wicket hefted the package and shook his head. "No good, you got Scotch tape on it. Go around the corner, they'll give you some brown paper."

Another line. He stood very quietly, a small black hat perched on his head, his body muffled in a fur-lined coat. I would always remember him for being overdressed and patient. He was always cold, and he was always willing to wait, for a bout, for a return bout, for a shot at a title. He was forty then, picking up fights wherever he could, waiting for one more big payday. If there had been no war, he would be retired in Aba, a rich man. He had been financially wiped out, but he said he could not complain, many others had lost all their property, and many, many others had lost their families and their lives.

A clerk finally handed him a long strip of gummed brown paper and a wet sponge in a glass dish. Tiger took it to a writing desk and began to tear the brown paper into small strips, his thick fingers careful and precise, the fingers of a man who taped his own hands.

When he finished the package he proudly held it up for me. "Now I know there is something else I can do."

We waited for the registry clerk silently. "Okay," he said, nodding at the package, then flipping it. "What's in it?"

"A medal," said Tiger softly.

"What's it worth?"

"I don't know. Fifty, hundred dollars?"

"No value," said the clerk, to himself. He weighed it, registered it, asked Tiger if he wanted it to go airmail. Tiger said, "Yes."

"One sixty."

Tiger gave him two dollar bills, and counted his change. He adjusted his scarf as he walked out into the bright street, and smiled, and shook my hand gravely and could only say, "Well . . .," and shrug, and start down the steps. I never saw him again.

In the summer of 1971, after working briefly as a guard in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dick Tiger returned to his native land. He was penniless, and brought nothing home except the cancer in his liver. He died that December, in Aba, at the age of forty-two. □

THE REVIEW

A story by Leslie Epstein

“Herman, pardon me, but did you take a bath lately?”
“What’s the matter, Sam, is one missing?”

Both men in brown suits, entering from opposite sides of the stage. Regina remembered how one man, Sam, wrinkled his nose.

Herman, indignantly: “I want you to know I have a bath three times a year, whether I need one or not!”

A series of violinists, with white handkerchiefs under their chins. Eyes shut. Every note memorized.

The Family, a play. The right part of the stage, as you faced it, was Russia. America on the left. When a man and woman and their daughters wondered if a character were alive or dead, why they had not received a letter, you could actually see this person opposite—behind bars, or through a sweatshop window, or on a box making a speech. At the turn of the century this was a sensational technique; when Regina had seen it, in the thirties, it was already old hat. And most of the seats were empty.

In 1934, it must have been, Zilbayarsky came out of retirement. What a lot of people! As many standing as sitting. “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is,” the actor cried, striking his chest, the thump-thump-thump awful to hear, “To have a thankless child.” He said he would not weep. “No, I’ll not weep”; but the spotlights lit up the tears that came out of his eyes. In the storm his back broke, he used a stick, fed cheese to a mouse. At

the end he pointed to his daughter. “Look there, look there.” But nothing happened. Then he died.

Endless jokes. For example, a Jew gets on a train at Krakow, on his way to Lodz. After a while a clever peasant spreads out his lunch, half a chicken, thick salamis, peaches, three smoked trout. Opposite, the Jew unwraps the head of a carp. Thinks the Pole to himself, Well, how come these Yids are so smart? Maybe it’s what they eat. *A police car, or ambulance, or fire truck, raced down Second Avenue.* Three hours later they come into the station. All the bones are by the feet of the Jew. *Another followed, drowning everything out.*

Regina, with a note pad on her knee, nervously twiddled a pencil between two fingers. She could, after forty years, remember the punch line—“See? Already you’re smarter!”—but not what made it funny. The comedian had a long head, a long face, and blue, thin lips.

The sound of the sirens died away. On the stage teen-age girls were chanting prayers and shaking bells. Sweat shone on their faces, their breasts. The incense they burned smelled like overripe fruit. Soon, she thought, people would take off their clothes. It was hot, airless. She glanced quickly at Charles, but could not make out his expression. Looking up, around, she tried to remember how much of the theater remained from her childhood. The seats, with their plywood backs, wooden armrests, the red plush worn through to pink threads, were original fixtures, as were the wall lamps, once fitted for gas. But the masks above

and to either side of the proscenium, grinning and grimacing, looked new—installed, probably, to mark the return of the theater to drama, instead of the films that had played there for years. Since the talkies. Boxes hung over the orchestra, and the gilded figures on each—mermaids and centaurs and little Pans—were broken and chipped, so the white plaster showed through. A large chandelier dropped down from the vault of the ceiling, and this she remembered, a circle of bulbs on curved metal necks, every one of them lit. The dim glow was touching, like Englishmen in English novels, Kipling's or Conrad's, dressed for dinner, their shoes shined in the jungle.

"Jesus," said Charles to her. "Look at that."

A small lamb was at the front of the stage. The girls sat in a semicircle around it, while it simply stood, its head stretched downward as if to graze, its hindquarters shaking.

"What's going on here? What are they going to do with it?"

"I don't know," Regina told him.

Someone in the audience began to sing, "We're little black sheep that have gone astray!" The sound of a flute, played by a cross-legged girl, her face hidden by dark hair, cut across his voice. Others joined in: "Baa! Baa! Baa!" But a drum was playing, and the lamb raised its white head.

Charles leaned toward her. "I've got a terrible thought."

"Don't worry." Regina said this with a laugh, her teeth showing sharply against the shade of her skin. He nodded, and turned to the stage. She looked at him, carefully enough to make out the long lashes, black and incongruous in what was otherwise a strong, square, masculine—almost an athlete's—face. He wore his hair long and ruffled up, wreathlike (Is this why she thought of him as athletic?), over a bald, tan patch. She was glad he hadn't changed his tie, which she thought very beautiful. He had been wearing it that afternoon, in the office elevator, and on an impulse she asked him if he could use her extra ticket to the theater.

He answered, because of the elevator, staring ahead. "What is it? Off-Broadway?"

"It's an old movie theater, on Second Avenue."

"I don't go to the theater much anymore. I don't go at all. It embarrasses me."

"What does?"

"The flesh and blood. The actors. To me it's just guys walking around, talking, waving sticks, whatever."

"You can't forget they're actors?"

"Yeah. Right. I want to protect them. To screen them off. Poor suckers. I'm ashamed for them."

"Well," she had said, "do you want to risk it?" The colors of his tie were red and green, bled to-

gether, with here and there a yellow parrot, upside down.

"Sure. But I'd prefer a movie. I'm crazy for them."

They dropped thirty stories. Regina worried. Was she going to ask men to take her out?

Charles was right, really. People said the theater was boring—but that wasn't it. It was embarrassing, mortifying. And movies were different. She used to say—had written a waspish article—in a plastic age, celluloid is the natural medium, like spun soybeans. She knew herself it was a shabby explanation. Light passing through a film: that was more the shape and manner of the brain itself. A beam projected from behind; in front, the screen, an expanded retina—the whole drama, the vague, shifting ideas, inside of one's head. Regina always looked at the crowds. In the movies the faces were tilted up, row on row, pebblestones, moons. Here—she threw an elbow over the back of her seat—people were yawning, grinning, looking away. Their faces seemed red to her, as if they were humiliated, the way Charles had said, by the actors' flesh and blood. It occurred to her that the imagination, like any other part of the body, could become diseased. Was this (smiling a little, against the line of her mouth) the illness of their time? Still, she doubted that things were ever different. All the Jews standing in these aisles, craning over each other for a glimpse not of Lear, not the king, but Zilbayarsky, Zilbayarsky with his cancer, how he wept, hobbled, pounded his chest, although a dying man. "Look there, look there," and they looked, squinted, said to each other, *What's going on? What's he talking about?* But from the balcony Regina, age four, or age five, had followed the line from his finger and saw something, like a small animal, a white pet, moving on his dead daughter's lips. She knew it was Cordelia's soul.

This audience made an O with their mouths, and gasped. She turned back toward the stage. The girls huddled together, the light glancing off their backs. A black thick liquid rippled under their heels, staining them.

"All right," Regina told Charles. "It's not real."

But he had hold of the back of a seat, and was leaning forward. To the flute and the drum the girls drew apart. The lamb lay **chin up**, its heart still pumping blood. People **lifted their heads**, smelling it. No one said anything. The girls came into the aisles and picked out a boy, blond, with a blond girlfriend, and made him stand. He was wearing a light college jacket in blue and white. Yale. He stepped into the aisle. The blond put her hands over her open mouth. He went onto the stage. He was taller than any of the girls, and very thin. They took off his clothes. He turned away.

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They brought him back. He crossed his hands before him. They raised his arms. His penis was small, retracted, his testicles drawn high with anxiety. Regina stood up.

"I want to go," she told Charles.

He stared at her. He didn't know her.

"Excuse me," she said, and stepped over his planted feet.

He followed her out. "Look," he said, at the door.

On the stage the boy was standing, all bony, with a spot of blood on his eyebrows, and on his right hand and his right foot's great toe.

The heat of the sunken sun beat out of the avenue. The street lamps were on. Blocks down, a group of red trucks with red lights had gathered, but there was no smoke, no fire. A lot of people were in the streets, moving in front of lighted windows. Regina took hold of Charles's arm. "I'm sorry," she said.

"What for?"

"I didn't know it would be like that. How rotten you had to see it."

"I enjoyed it. I guess I wish I didn't, it sounds so lousy, but my heart was pounding like hell. My heart never pounds. I can control it. When they killed that lamb, when I knew they really killed it, my hair stood, I sweated. A lamb is a big animal, it's not like killing a fly."

"Then I'm sorry I made you leave." Regina smiled a little, which again contradicted the downward lines of her small, flat face. She put a cigarette in her mouth. He lit it.

"Are you all right, Regina?"

"Yes. I am. I was fine until I felt this confusion. It was as if all the air had gone out of the room: But instead of not being able to breathe, I couldn't think. My brain stopped."

He laughed. "No one will believe it!"

So did she. "It's started again."

He asked her if she had eaten. He knew a place nearby where they had baked stuffed artichoke. They could split one, with wine.

She hesitated, unsettled that it should be so hot—at night, and still only May. She would go home, bathe, allow herself three cigarettes. But she was surprised to feel hungry. "How do you stuff an artichoke?"

A boy, white, Italian-looking, with damp curls on his forehead, stepped from behind a car and said, "Give me a quarter."

Automatically Regina snapped open her bag. Charles pushed her behind him. "What?" he said to the boy.

"I want some change."

"What?"

"You got ears."

The boy was wearing a white undershirt, the

straps over his bare shoulders. "I could waste you easy," he told Charles, and took a step back. His hands were in the pockets of his jeans.

"What did you say?"

Regina saw a cab and waved her arm. "I want to go home."

"Riverside and 102nd," Charles told the driver. He got in beside her. The boy put his head in the open window.

"Watch out for me, Jack."

The cab went west a block, then moved skillfully in and out of the cars on Third Avenue. The driver's name was Griminoux—Haitian, Regina guessed, staring at the thin black face, the compressed lips, in the photo. Charles put his arm on her shoulder.

"You take out the heart," he said.

She edged toward the corner. He stayed with her. What was he talking about? Oh! Artichokes! Breadcrumbs! She let him try to kiss her cheek. His leg trembled alongside hers. She realized the performance, the killing, the backs and breasts of the girls, even the Yale boy, a teen-ager only, had excited him. What if he thought she had been aroused? That that was why she wanted to leave? To take him home? It would be a misunderstanding. She thought of many things she could say; but what she said was, "You were married once, weren't you?"

He started to tell her about his wives, the poetess, the novelist. He said he liked lady writers. Regina looked out the window. They were in the East Fifties. Last fall she and Davy had started a book together, a topographical anatomy of Manhattan, based upon Freud's *Anatomy of the Mental Personality*. Photos by husband, text by wife. They had finished one chapter, on a cross-town axis, before Davy moved out. The West Side was the Id, nine streets in closeup to stand for the nine circles of Hell; this neighborhood, with its doormen, the TV cameras sweeping the lobbies, the clipped dogs in collars, was the Superego; and the Ego was Central Park, a little breathing room. Charles had printed it, without the pictures. After that, on her own, Regina had started another chapter, this time with a vertical axis, Harlem and Wall Street opposed, Greenwich Village stuck in between, a relief from numbers, angles, straight lines. She imagined this cab on Waverly Place. *Wa-a-a-a-ave-ry!* And she had another idea, using a series of concentric circles. What if Times Square were ground zero, the raw hypothalamus, the cauldron of instincts, and the defenses were the rings of concrete and steel? Beyond that were the other boroughs and suburbs, themselves encircled by forest, hill, meadow, and then the broad band of the sea.

Charles kissed the lobe of her ear.

Regina said, "Lady writers! Is it a species?"

"There are characteristics. They neglect their teeth."

"I don't know you well enough to kiss you. I don't know if you have any children."

"Look, I think I know what is bothering you. He was giving orders. He wasn't asking. Do you think I care about a lousy quarter? It's got nothing to do with the principle of the thing. I give away a lot of money on the street."

"Well, what were you trying to do, make him say please?"

The driver turned around to ask where they wanted to go through the park. He was heavy, with an American drawl. It disturbed Regina that the man and the photo did not match.

"Okay, forget it." He took her hand, in a conciliatory way, but Regina let it lie there, knowing that would be maddening.

What breeze there was that evening came from the west, and carried with it the pale sour smoke from the factory, or refinery—Regina did not know what it was, only that it ran night and day, Sundays included, turning out a large pile of white ash—Jews' bones, she thought in her wildest moments—on the other side of the river. There were nights, winter nights, all the city's furnaces burning no. 6 fuel under flat clouds, the sulphur spreading to where she lay on her bed, when she felt herself to be just that: a Jewess in a giant oven. The smell was in the lobby, and inside the lobby door, on which someone was banging. She looked back. Charles pressed to the glass.

"You should have kept the cab," she told him.

"I want to walk you upstairs."

"There's an elevator."

He followed her across the black and white tiles.

They rode up silently; then he walked behind her down the narrow hall. She took her door key out of her bag, and turned about. He asked her if she would be at the magazine the next day. She said she would stay home to write her review. He said he would like to see what she had to say. She would, too, she said, again with a laugh. He put his left hand on her waist and bent near her. She pulled back and put her key to the lock. It was upside down.

"I like your hair," he was saying. "I like your mouth. I like your neck. I like your ears. Smile. I like your smile."

The key went in. The cylinder turned. Double locked.

"You smiled three times tonight."

The cylinder went over again.

"You have the kind of face that belongs on a statue, a lasting face. You look as if you were seeing ruins."

"Is that from the novelist? Or the poetess?"

"You think I'm mocking you?"

"No."

"I like the way you smell."

"Don't say that. Any of that. There's no reason to mention my hair."

Her hair was black, parted in the center, with a few long white wiry strands in it. He scooped it up, squeezed it. She gasped. It was as if he held a handful of nerves.

"Goodnight, Charles," she said.

"Okay."

He went down the hall. She waited, gave the key a half-turn, and pushed. There was a chain across the door. Foolishly she closed it, hoping the chain would drop away. It held. Though she had left a light on, there was only a black crack on the other side of the door.

Regina went back to the elevator and called Charles's name. A pile of weights sank into the shaft. The box rose, like something approaching in space. The cage arrived, empty. Then she heard someone skipping stairs. Charles was running. She saw his bald spot, saw the hair slipping from it.

"Regina, what's wrong?"

"I'm locked out. There's a chain across the door."

He led the way to the apartment and pushed the door as far as it would go. "Have you got a key for this?"

"There is none. It slips off from the inside."

"Well how did you get it on?"

"I didn't. I locked the door, but I didn't put on the chain."

"Then someone's inside. Who?"

"Benjamin. Francis. But they wouldn't throw the chain. Francis can barely reach it. Ben never did this before. He knew I was coming back late. He knew I had to get in."

"Maybe he put it on and meant to take it off. Only forgot. Wait a second." Charles worked his right hand through and pulled at the links. His body shook. He clamped his lower lip.

"Are you going to snap it?"

"No! Christ!" He pulled his hand out. The fingers were white, pinched. "You'll have to call your boys."

She did, loudly. There was no response.

"Try it again."

"They can't hear me. They must be asleep."

"What about the back door? Isn't there a service door to the landing?"

"Yes. There is. But it's locked."

"Well, do you have a key? Does the super have a key? It's not that late—"

"No. I mean, it's bolted. It doesn't work with a key."

"All right. I'll telephone. I guess they'll hear that. I'll tell them you're out here. There's a booth on West End; if it's working I'll use it. Wherever you go the receivers are hanging on wires."

"You hurt your hand."

"That's a strong chain, Regina."

"I am sorry. It's so stupid."

"I've counted the times you said I'm sorry. Four times."

"My God, what don't you count! I don't like it. I don't like the way it makes you sound. Like a songwriter. *I've counted the times you said I'm sorry.* Country Western. *I've counted the teardrops in your eyes.* Hangdog blues. What are you trying to find out about me?"

"I just want to know one thing. What did they do to that boy? What happened after we walked out of the theater?"

Instead of replying, she wrote out her number and gave it to him. He walked down the stairs.

Regina counted, too. Cigarettes. She lit another and leaned against the wall. She saw herself, as she sometimes did, from above and outside, with an elbow cupped in her hand, the posture of a bored woman, a prostitute, an usherette. But she was not bored. It occurred to her that she was looking at herself with Charles's eyes. He thought she would sleep with him. He thought she would show him the theater. *What did they do to that boy?* She remained, with one foot against the wall.

All right, what *did* they do to him? She would face it. She recalled his thin stick legs, the points of his pelvis, his hands crossed before him—that's what doomed him, that gesture. It was from another world. Whiffenpoofs. And she had stood up. Run away. Why? Why hadn't she stayed? She had been panting like a fish out of water, no air reaching her brain. "See? Already you're smarter!" *Ziehst? Du bist shoy'n klieger!* But why was everyone laughing? Because the Jew got the Pole's food and the Pole got the Jew's. What was funny about that? Then she realized that the Pole had sacrificed everything for intelligence and had ended with the head of a carp. At the same time—and here was the twist, the wry Yiddish joke—he got his money's worth. Such snorting! She had made a bad mistake about the comedian. The long face, the wide dark lips were her father's, the way her father looked now. Mentally, she added the white wisps of hair that fell uncombed over his collar. He used to have shelves of fragile things. He used to blow animals for her out of glass. She was not sure whether this was a true memory, or something he said he had done. Warm tears came into her eyes. She thought of Zilbayarsky saying, *Didst thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou come to this?* Oh, how could she turn her father, the old gentleman, into a gagman, some Herman, some Sam? But she suffered too, gave everything to her children, and what did they do? They locked her out! How dare they! She stamped her foot in irritation.

The hallway was dim, and pink-painted. "Eight," said Regina, lighting one cigarette from the hot tip

of another. The door was open a crack. She shut it. She thought it perfectly possible that the boys were wide awake and that the door was locked as part of a game. For a moment she was certain of that. She could almost hear them giggling, holding their sides, pounding a pillow. Some joke! Practical jokers! Francis liked to hide behind doors and shout Boo! Once she heard Benjamin warn him it would turn her hair gray. Ben liked disaster. Burned with fever; gagged on a bone; smelled smoke, didn't she?, in the hallway. She told him about the boy who cried wolf until no one believed him when the wolf really came. He thought about this and said, a few days later, "There are no wolves in the city." Regina looked at him, at the round forehead, the still round baby's eyes: "Yes there are." "Gray ones?" he wanted to know. She nodded. "With yellow eyes?" She nodded again. "Teeth?" "Teeth." That was how they frightened each other.

The elevator whirred and the door opened and Mrs. Berenson, the honey-blond, came out with a plump man that Regina had not seen before. They turned away from her, down the hall. He had her elbow in his hand. "You're hurting me," Mrs. Berenson said. "You're not supposed to hurt me, Jonathan." She was taller than he was and he had to reach up to put his hand on her neck. "Ouch! Ouch! Don't treat me like that!" The man's suit was too small for him. Didn't he speak? Silent Jonathan! At the door they both turned and saw Regina, shrinking against the wall. "It's okay," said Mrs. Berenson. "She's a neighbor." They went inside, and she heard them laughing, a high laugh and a low laugh, through the door.

Well, thought Regina, a boy might be frightened hearing things in the hallway. Of course the chain had been thrown before Mrs. Berenson arrived. Maybe they heard Charles talking to her. I like your mouth. I like your neck. She fumbling with the key on the outside, the bolt shot from within. He said he liked her smell. Could he smell her? Were his senses sharpened because he was aroused? What did he mean, she was gazing on ruins? That she was timeless? That she was old? She was sure she was older than he was; he was probably forty. Or forty-one. Did he think she neglected her teeth? She did not need a mirror to see her face. The skin was naturally dark, darker than olive, the lips turned downward, there were deep lines on either side of her mouth. Davy used to call her an Inca, though he probably meant a Mayan, an impassive Mayan, with broad flat cheekbones and black hair low on her brow. When they were first married he used to take hundreds of photos, the light dramatically behind her, looking for, finding—Davy was a good photographer—just that: the abiding Indian. So her face *would* be preserved, would gaze, from all angles, on the ruins.

Here was another possibility. What if Davy had come around? She had warned him not to. Yes, that was it. The boys had locked the door on him, not on her! He would have called and discovered she wasn't at home. He got indignant when she left the boys alone. Not that she did. Not often. She had been to one party since he had moved out. Still, he had sensed it, and when she got home he had been there, holding Francis, rocking him, crooning over him. "He was scared silly," he had said, and smiled. He always smiled. He would stand in public and discuss the most serious matters, and his lips would pull back. What did you call it, that kind of grin? She hated it! He would point a camera at her; all she saw of him was the smile. The wink and the smile. It didn't come from high spirits, but just the opposite—from a knowledge of chaos. That's where she'd seen it. On the face of Oswald. On Bremmer. On Sirhan Sirhan. It was the smirk of an assassin. She thought of what he did with his camera: load it, aim it, shoot it, as if it were a gun.

The phone rang inside the apartment. Regina tensed against the wall, hugging herself. The silence after the sound lasted so long she was sure one of the boys had picked up the receiver, was sleepily rubbing his eyes, saying who? what did he want? who was talking? But the phone rang again, and continued ringing, many times, jeering, then stopped altogether. Regina discovered that her body, which seemed stock still against the wall, was in fact tensing and relaxing, bunching itself, at the intervals of a telephone's bell. She calmed herself. She blew smoke in a stream. But when, after a time, the phone sounded again, her whole body rose, as if she were leaping a hurdle. As the ringing continued she saw something, not in an imaginary way, not as a dim hallucination, but realistically, as if the door to the apartment did not exist. What she saw was a figure, in shadows, hovering over the receiver. It seemed to her a man. He put his hand out, reaching hesitantly, but after the ring withdrew it. She understood then that this was the explanation, really the simplest, of the chain thrown over the door. A man had got into the flat. Perhaps through the skylight. Perhaps by tricking the boys. A thief. A junkie. When he heard her on the outside he locked himself in. But it was a trap. She in the hall. The skylight too high. The phone incessantly ringing. What would he do? What if he took hold of Francis? At that instant she thought of the boy on the stage, the blood daubed on him, and knew what would happen: they were going to take out his eyes. She ran forward. The telephone stopped. Before she could pound on it, the door opened wide. Charles stood in his shirtsleeves. Without a word she slipped by him and went inside.

Benjamin and Francis slept together in a room that overlooked 102nd. The window was shut. The air smelled of socks. Regina turned on a small lamp above a chest of drawers. A blade of light fell directly onto Francis' face and his wet brown hair. First he smiled, then he grimaced, then he smiled: after many difficulties, a happy ending. His eyes opened and he looked directly at his mother. "Don't look under the tablecloth," he said. "It's extremely beautiful there." Then he turned on his side and put a hand like a little paw under his chin.

Above Ben's bed an air battle was taking place. Planes on thin wires were suspended dipping and diving. Behind one, a large bomber, red cellophane simulated flames. The Germans were losing. Swastikas and iron crosses plunged toward the ground. Benjamin himself was nearly invisible, three fingers clutching a blanket over his head, and a brown ankle. Regina wanted to see him. He looked to her, especially sleeping, like a poet, like Shelley, with Shelley's curved eyelids and brow. But it was impossible to lean close to the bed. The slightly shining wires sprang over him like a cartoonist's drawing of a man's thoughts. She wanted to sweep the whole network aside, as she might take a broom to a cobweb. There was a rule in the house against playing with guns. Wasn't this a violation? It was warfare. Murderous. More murderous for its grace and charm. She had never forgotten how Mussolini's son said his bomb blasts were flowers. That was the essence of fascism, the way they tried to make death a drama, a flower, a show of lights. She put her hand out to rip the wires away, but stopped at the sight of a tiny parachutist, underneath an orange and white parachute. With a finger she touched him. At once he spiraled down to the bedpost, and the little parachute folded like a beach umbrella. She pushed the airman up his wire and released him. He wobbled down slowly, past the dogfight, the bomber in flames, the Messerschmitt with the crippled wing. Regina lifted him again. For a moment she did not think of anything else. She was watching him tumble and glide, a dark plastic inch of a man.

"Your boys?" It was Charles. He was in the room, his coat on, holding a drink in each hand.

"Yes. Don't talk so loud."

He walked over to Francis, then to Ben. "I made you a drink. Scotch and water. No ice."

"Can't you lower your voice?" she asked, but she realized he couldn't, that it wasn't in him, any more than it was possible for Davy, the smiler, to scream. *Relax*, was what he always told her. She took the drink.

"A moment ago we were trying to wake them up."

Regina shut off the light and walked out to the living room. He came after her and circled the room, picking up ashtrays, fingering lampshades, turning the covers of books. Prowling.

"Sit down," he said to Regina, like the owner of the place.

"Thanks," she said, confused, and sat on the sofa.

"Nice room. Nice rug. Good pictures. Especially that." He gestured toward a Victorian painting, done on glass, of a group on a lawn. They were about to go up in a balloon.

"Yes. Look at the dog. He's not going into that basket, not for anything!"

"Oh, yeah. Yeah." He looked about, distracted. "Regina, why did they do it? Why did your children lock you out?"

"How did you get in here, Charles? You went to the telephone. You frightened me when you opened the door."

"I came through the window. I counted the floors from the street, seven floors, and there was an open window, with a white curtain blowing out. I started to phone, from the booth on West End. I got my dime in okay. But it was like a urinal in there. I looked down and I was standing in a puddle. There are a lot of animals in the city."

"What do you mean? Do you mean people?"

"What do *you* call someone who pisses in the streets?"

"Have *you* ever tried to find a public toilet here? It's the same in any Anglo-Saxon city. Sydney, Australia, for example."

"You're bluffing, Regina. Have you been to London? London is a clean town."

"Which part?"

"If you can't wait ten minutes you don't belong in society. Society is ten minutes' worth of restraint. The sphincter is a voluntary muscle."

"Your anatomy's rotten. We're not talking about defecation."

"We might as well be. I've seen that, too. Once in the back of a taxi. Once in the main reading room of the public library, on a chair. In the street all the time. It looks like a dog's, but it isn't."

"No, the difference is, it's done on purpose, it *says* something, it's a form of symbolic speech. That's why phone booths are so popular—a place to leave a message. *Piss on it*. On the city. On their lives. On the way that we live."

"Come on, come off it. Anything goes, that's all. Everybody is doing what he wants to. Period. What was that case in Brooklyn? A guy goes into a delicatessen and asks for a cheese Danish, and the poor sucker behind the counter says no cheese Danish, we've got prune Danish, and the cat pulls a gun and kills him. It might have been cigarettes. It might have been a stick of gum. Maybe someone steps on your shoe. The other day a man told another man that's no way to treat a dog. Dead. Slashed. Jugular. The threshold of frustration is zero."

"I really think you are trying to scare me. I think that's the whole purpose of that speech."

"I don't have to. You were already frightened when the door opened, because for all you knew it was a black man there, a black rapist, instead of me. That put your heart in your mouth."

"Why a *black* man? Why rape? I didn't think anything like it, and I resent your suggesting I did."

"You're kidding yourself on a lot of scores. Look, I was standing in that booth, in a puddle—an animal can't wait ten minutes; for an animal, ten minutes is the same as eternity—and I realize that the night is dark, the streetlight is out, burnt out or knocked out and no will to repair it, and that the booth is glass, it's lit up, the only light in the street. What am I? A target. There's a war on, lady, in case you forgot."

"A deer will wait six hours before she walks into a meadow to drink. Spiders sit day after day next to their webs." Regina said this softly, holding herself still, afraid to tip the tears that, to her dismay, had come into her eyes. But he saw them.

"Now why are you crying?"

"Don't call me *lady*!"

"It's an expression. Look, let's drop it. We aren't getting through to each other."

"Yes we are. This isn't a failure of communication. It's a disagreement."

"Don't leave your windows open, Regina. Not the ones by the fire escape."

"You *are* dropping it, and I have more to say!"

But he wasn't looking at her, he was looking at the old painting, with its crimson balloon. Regina had a moment's confusion, in which she thought the issue between them was whether he was mistaking animals, with their patience, for men. Charles turned then, and said, almost as if he had been reading her mind, "Animals don't kill their own species, except, I hear, for rats. And as far as I know they don't rape either. I guess the female indicates to the male when she's ready. Ruffles her feathers or exposes her rear. I don't want to defame them with comparisons to human beings."

This remark, which ought to have deepened her confusion, which almost seemed calculated to do so, in fact clarified what she wanted to say. "Animals are beautiful and patient; but they are simple, and I mean, really, simple-minded. In us, simple-mindedness is a disease. I don't mean stupidity. Or intelligence. I agree with the idea that animals don't suffer because suffering is a complicated—a complicated emotion. Like love, which is complicated too. Rape is simple-minded because the rapist has to deny the part of his mind that knows the woman is real, is the same as himself. He has to deal with a thing, a toy, she might as well be rubber, or dead. And the start of it all is calling her *lady*."

"If you want a disease, a moral disease, to explain things, I'll tell you what it is. It's that all over this town kids wake up in the morning, kids

in their teens, and they go over to their mirrors, and they look in the mirrors—at those lips and those noses and that kinky stuff all over their skulls—and one after the other, like catching the flu, they get an idea, a single idea, it's all they need, it dawns on them: *Man, why not?*"

"You call people animals, black people, people who threaten you, who you think threaten you, because *you're* simple-minded. Profoundly simple-minded. The disease isn't even racism—and I think you're a racist, obviously you're a racist—it's this refusal to bear anything complicated, anything complex. What soft-headedness! In reality everything is mixed up and ironical and difficult, and our minds just give way, as they never have before, just collapse into black and white, including the black and white races, and good and bad, and light and dark, and cut-and-dried, oh, and the rest of it. We have to kill everything that gives us an argument, beginning with ourselves, like a self-lobotomy, and then everything around us, so finally nothing stirs, the world is still and simple and clear. Like ice."

Regina held on to her glass, wondering what would happen. She wanted a cigarette, but didn't dare move. She even thought he might hit her. But he only finished his own drink and set it on the table. Then he took out his wallet.

"This is a picture of my daughter. It's about a year old. She's fourteen now. She lives with the novelist. She plays the piano, the violin, and reed instruments. Clarinet. Oboe. Sax. And she's got a hell of a ravishing voice."

Regina took the snapshot. The girl was not pretty, particularly, but fresh-faced, light-eyed, clear-eyed, with freckles and, over her shoulders, braids. She looked like the child of settlers in old photographs. There was the same gingham dress.

"What's her name?" she asked.

"Sarah. The same as her mother's mother."

Regina handed the photo back. She wondered why he showed it to her. She said, "She has a wonderful smile. A sunny smile."

"I went to hear her six weeks ago. As a matter of fact, it's the last time I saw her. She's in the orchestra at Music and Art. Eighty-five kids, and she's about the youngest one in it. Leonard Bernstein was conducting. He was modest. He was serious. He didn't give a damn about us, Regina. He wasn't there for us. They were doing *Israel in Egypt* by Handel. I got there a minute before they started and saw Sarah right away, in a line of singers, in a dark blue dress, a white collar, at least a head and six inches shorter than anyone else. She didn't see me. She couldn't know I'd be there. I saw the ad in the paper that morning, in fact. I didn't know if she'd be on oboe, or violin, or what.

It turned out she was singing. Okay. I know something about music. I've got a good enough ear to tune a piano. I tell you, this was remarkable. The most remarkable oratorio I ever heard. It was what Handel had in his head. The audience was old people, grandparents, great-grandparents from Vienna, from Prague, from Berlin. They knew. So did Bernstein. You could tell from his back. Remarkable. Kids wearing glasses, and the kettle-drum said Property of the Board of Education of the City of New York, but there was no such place, not after a while, there was Moses, there was Pharaoh, and the plagues. Locusts, lice, flies. Hailstones and fire. Wheat withering. Cattle dying. And the sky coming down in a great storm of dust. Sarah started to sing. All alone. An air. 'Thou didst blow with the wind, Thou didst blow—' She wasn't looking at the score. She was looking at me. She must have seen me come in. 'Thou didst blow, blow, bl-ow, bl-ow, bl-ow-ow-ow, ow! ow! ow!'"

He stood in the center of the room, his hands at his sides, and he snapped his head back and forth.

"Please stop," Regina said.

He stopped, picked up his drink, saw that it was empty. "I could be wrong. Maybe she wasn't singing to me. Maybe she was looking over my head."

"No."

She watched as he came to her and put his hands on her shoulders. His weight pushed her into the sofa. She trembled, feeling something cold passing from him to her, from his arms and hands into her shoulders, like cold electricity. It was almost as if he were transferring to her a part of himself, something awful, through his hands. She wasn't dumb. She got the point. The point was she now had to kiss him. Kiss him? She would have to sleep with him, too. She did not want to, would forbid it, would tell him no, and don't touch me, and please go home; but all the time she felt the chill of his loneliness running into her, and did not resist.

He covered her mouth with his mouth, and set one of his knees between her legs. There were black cloth buttons on her green blouse. He undid them. He put his face onto her breasts. She could feel the temperature of her body falling, her blood sluggish and thick. Her teeth chattered once. She looked for Charles and saw him down by her feet. What was he doing? Unrolling her stockings. Kissing her toes. He rose and touched her vagina; it made her feel brittle, breakable, like glass. She ripped with a nervous laugh, then put her arms around herself to keep warm. Her blouse, her pants, her white underthings were drifted around her. Poor man, she thought: rubbing, rubbing, rubbing sticks.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

She unstuck her lips. "I'm cold."

"Scared?"

"Cold."

"I'll lie on top of you."

Her feet had been on the floor. He lifted them and put them over the edge of the couch. He lay next to her, his clothes loosened. Then he rolled above her. It was worse. She felt as if she had been blocked from the sun. In that shadow she hung on him, threw her legs over his, moved her hands through the hair on his back, until her fingers came to metal that was colder than ice: absolute zero.

"What's that? What's that on your back?"

He made a slight space between them, but she held onto the metal, stuck to it like the tongue of a child on a freezing gatepost.

"I'm no Jew in a delicatessen. I'm not going to die like a dog."

He said that, lowered himself, and forced his way in her. Regina, aghast, felt she would shatter, break into shards. Again, she wanted to laugh, and thought of a joke to explain it. A pane of glass. Get it? The pain of glass.

"Like a dog," he repeated, and was done.

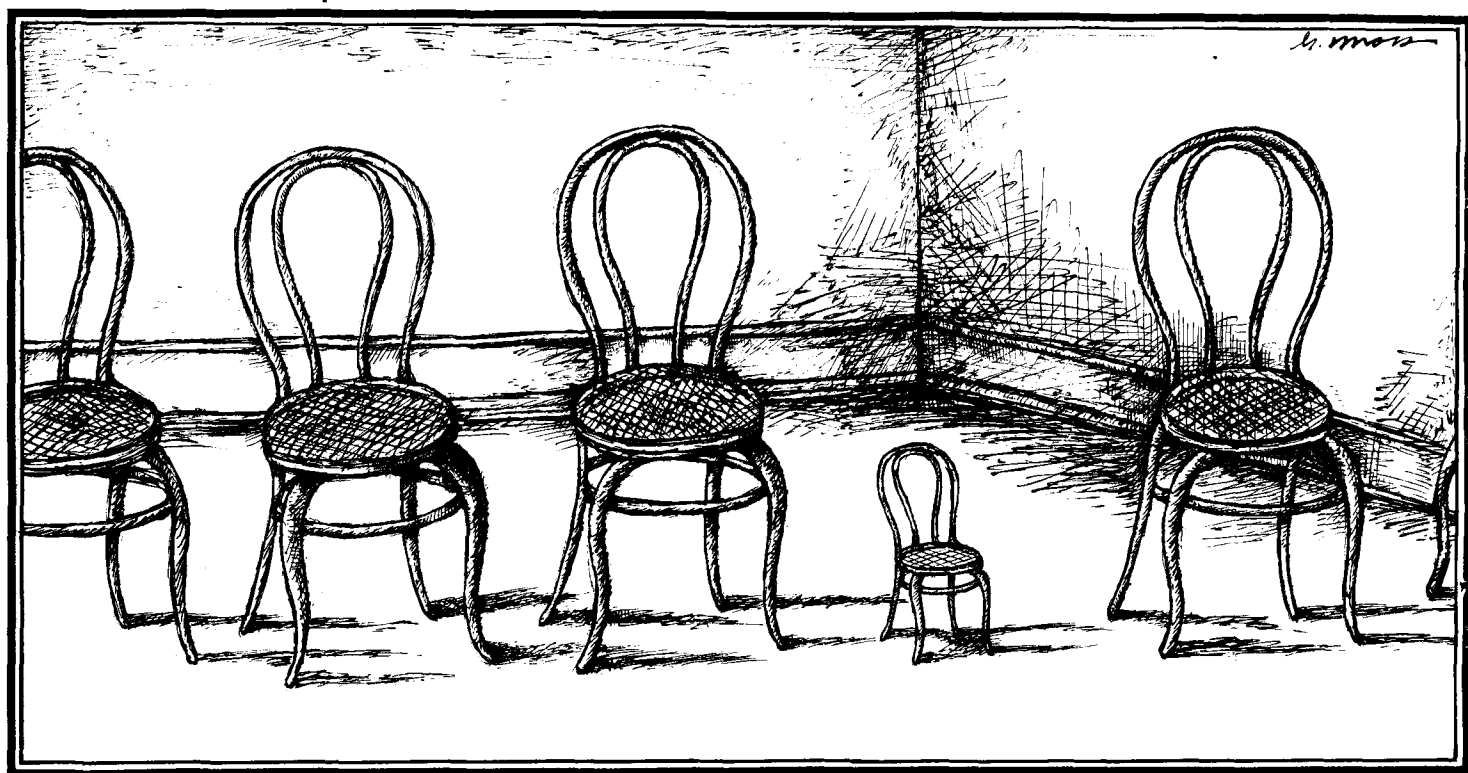
They lay briefly without moving or speaking. Then he surprised her. He rose on his elbows, leaned forward, and kissed the place above her eyebrows, midway between them. He soon lifted his head, but the warmth remained, spreading from the spot, which almost seemed to be glowing. The chill drew slowly off her. Her hands opened. Regina felt like an Oriental, like an Indian woman, with a jewel in her forehead.

But when she woke some hours later, she was cold, as cold as before. The room was dark, except for city light that was reflected off the low clouds, through her window. She got off the sofa and, in her bedroom, wrapped a housecoat around her. She returned to where Charles was sleeping, his face in the cushions, the knuckles of his hand on the floor. She could make out the strap on his back, and the dim shine of the metal. She knelt and quickly removed the gun. It was immensely heavy. She held it in both hands, turning it over, the handle, the barrel, the trigger. She knew that it made her cold. She carried it, like something alive, across the room and placed it, really slid it off her hands, onto a shelf. There was a faint rattling sound at the window, which stopped at once, then began again. A shift in the wind. The white smoke, invisible at night, was dropping its ash on the windowpanes, on the sash, in a fine black layer across the sill. The curtain blew inward. One of the boys cried out, and was quiet. Laughter boom-boomed from the next apartment. A few streets away a car sounded its horn. It occurred to her that in her review she would describe everything just as it happened, from the broken plaster on the boxes of the theater to this act of love. She went back to the sofa and sat next to Charles. He did not stir. She ran a hand through her hair. She was thinking about the city. She thought it was like Pompeii. □

MOVING AGAIN

At night the mountains look like huge dim
hens. In a few geological eras
new mountains may
shatter the earth's shell
and poke up like stone wings.
Each part must serve for a whole.
I bring my sons to the base
of the foothills and we go up.
From a scruff of Ponderosa
pines we startle gaudy swerves
of magpies who settle in our rising
wake. Then there's a blooming
prickly pear. "Jesus, Dad, what's that?"
Willy asks. It's like a yellow tulip
grafted to a cactus: it's a beautiful
wound the cactus puts out
to bear fruit and be healed.
If I lived with my sons
all year I'd be less sentimental
about them. We go up
to the mesa top and look down
at our new hometown. The thin air
warps in the melting light
like the aura before a migraine.
The boys are tired. A tiny magpie
fluffs into a pine far below
and further down in the valley
of child support and lights
people are opening drawers.
One of them finds a yellowing
patch of newsprint with a phone
number penciled on it
from Illinois, from before they moved, before
Nicky was born. Memory
is our root system.
"Verna," he says to himself
because his wife's in another room,
"whose number do you suppose this is?"

by William Matthews



DWARFS

by Sonny Kleinfeld

Roughly 100,000 Americans are dwarfs. They have trouble finding mates, buying shoes, using elevators or public telephones—and admitting to themselves that they are, in fact, different.

Charles Bedou, at the age of forty, stands four and a half feet tall. When the tow-headed Bedou was born, he weighed nearly nine pounds and was the size of any normal baby. Five years later, however, he was less than two feet tall; at ten, he was three feet; when he celebrated his eighteenth birthday, he was four-foot-six; and in the ensuing twenty-two years, he did not grow another inch. His body is all out of whack. His head and torso are the size of a much taller person's; his arms and legs are much too small. He is what is known as a dwarf.

Bedou's parents split up when he was six, and since neither wanted custody, he was shuffled from relative to relative, "like a plate of spaghetti," un-

til, at last, when he was eighteen he ran away. "I had no dates in school, and I didn't have many friends," he says. "When you're the only dwarf in sixteen counties, whom do you date? It took me more than six months to find a job. I applied to more places than you have fingers and toes, and everyone felt my brain must be as stunted as my body. When I finally got work at an insurance company in Minnesota, there were still things my boss didn't want me to do. Life hasn't been exactly marvelous."

Dwarfs receive mention in the Bible, and during ancient times household dwarfs were extremely popular: they were kept by the early pharaohs and abounded at the courts of the Ptolemies. They flourished once again in imperial Rome, where slave children were occasionally stunted to increase the fetching price. Kings in medieval Europe and during the Renaissance kept them at hand, and some dwarfs became such favorites that they themselves were given servants. Isabella d'Este designed part of her palace for dwarfs, and remembered two of them in her will. They appear in a number of Velasquez's paintings. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the czars and noblemen of

Russia kept innumerable dwarfs, and elaborate dwarf weddings and funerals were not uncommon. However, while especially personable dwarfs earned responsible positions, most of them functioned as lowly entertainers and as household fools. In Western Europe, household dwarfs were still heard of in the eighteenth century, but their visibility had declined.

In the United States today, dwarfs have formed a national organization called The Little People of America, which has its headquarters in Owatonna, Minnesota. The association was founded in 1957 by a group of twenty dwarfs who convened in Reno, Nevada. The idea for the meeting, as it happens, came from Spike Jones, of zany music fame, who urged his friend, dwarf actor Billy Barty, to start an outfit that would speak for little people. Barty served as the first president, and by 1960 the association had a hundred members. Now, more than 2200 little people have joined the association. Anyone four-foot-ten or smaller (the height arbitrarily fixed by the medical profession as distinguishing dwarfs from normal-sized people) can join. The organization's motto is "Think Big," and its basic message is that dwarfs suffer mainly because of society's attitude toward them.

Among other things, the association maintains an adoption referral service, which finds homes for dwarf children abandoned by parents. "A lot of dwarfs used to be committed to mental institutions by parents who didn't want them," an LPA man says. In 1968, the LPA established a foundation to raise funds for scholarships and for the ordinary expenses of needy dwarfs. A special division is devoted to problems faced by teen-aged dwarfs. "At one time, the world thought the only thing to do with little people was to put them in sideshows and laugh at them," says Gerald Rasa, a Pennsylvania public relations man who is the LPA's president. "They were labeled 'heaven's curse.' We're trying to show the world that we are useful, that we're not society's black sheep."

"Dwarfs have a lot of architectural problems that we're trying to learn to deal with," says Bedou, a former president of the LPA. "Ever since I can remember, my feet have dangled over the edge of chairs. I would literally slide off the seat. To stay on, I have to wrap my legs around the chair, like I'm riding a bucking bronco. It's not very dignified. Get on your knees and try to make a phone call from a public telephone. Get on your knees and try to negotiate the first step on a bus. Get into an elevator and try to push the button for the seventy-eighth floor. I have to have clothing custom-made, and it costs me just as much as it does Wilt Chamberlain. Imagine going into a shoe store and asking for a nice loafer in a size one."

Sonny Kleinfeld is a staff writer for *The Wall Street Journal*.

Bedou, however, makes the most of his four feet and six inches. "If I have to make a phone call," he says, "I holler at someone, 'Put the damn dime in for me.' I have a very good set of lungs, and I don't hesitate to use them. I can't use a urinal in a men's room. It's outrageous that I should have to pay a dime, so I crawl under a stall, and I usually go down the line and open them all up. You plan a little better when you're short. I use pedal extensions to drive a car. Other dwarfs I know fly their own planes with similar devices. Our homes aren't much different, except we favor modern furniture, because it's usually low-slung. I have lots of stools around the house. Some of us, you know, are not much more than two feet tall."

Largely under the auspices of the LPA, dwarfs have brought to the attention of legislators the architectural problems they face. They have joined other minority groups, such as the National Association of the Physically Handicapped, to push for legislation requiring lower pay phones, curbside ramps, railings in public toilets, and similar conveniences.

Short-statured persons share a fierce pride in their heritage, and they take pleasure in pointing out the movers and shakers of their kind who have played important roles in history. Attila the Hun, for instance, is believed to have been a dwarf, an unusually bloodthirsty one. Both Charles III, king of Sicily and Naples in the fourteenth century, and his contemporary, Ladislav I of Poland, were midgets. Ladislav won the nickname of the Warrior Midget King, and the history books credit (or discredit) him with having trimmed a substantial number of taller men down to his size in battle. The twenty-three-inch midget Richebourg of Paris played no small part in the French Revolution. Along with hidden dispatches, he was thumbed through enemy lines as a babe in arms; he would nurse a bottle until safety was reached and then, after fumbling in his clothes, would produce and light up a tremendous cigar. Sir Jeffrey Hudson, a midget courtier during the reign of Charles I in seventeenth-century England, polished off his share of men in his country's wars, only to wind up a captive of Turkish pirates.

A number of noncombatant midgets and dwarfs also made the history books—Coppernin, who served the mother of George II; Nicholas Ferry, a counselor-attendant to King Stanislas of Poland. Even so, dwarf history owes most of its notoriety to Phineas T. Barnum, whose midget showpiece, General Tom Thumb, became one of the most popular men of his era. Thumb was not a career soldier. Originally, his name was Charles Sherwood Stratton; the alias derived from the ballad containing the line, "In Arthur's court, Tom Thumb did live," and Barnum threw on the "General" in the interest of public relations.

Thumb stood thirty-one inches tall, and weighed almost seventy pounds. Barnum presented him as the tiniest man in the annals of civilization, a bit of mendacity willfully indulged by the General. Barnum found Thumb a pint-sized bride named Lavinia Warren, who, he claimed, was the smallest woman to walk the earth, though she would have needed several inches of cropping to warrant that distinction. With customary hoopla, Barnum arranged a wedding in New York's Grace Episcopal Church in 1863, a tribute to bad taste that afforded possibly the worst start ever made by newlyweds, whatever their height. The honeymoon junket included a pause for dinner at the White House with President Lincoln, whose waist was higher than either Thumb or his new bride. In the end, Thumb and his wife proved of heartier substance than their theatrical mentor. While Barnum's financial condition took a nose dive, General and Mrs. Thumb gradually left the stage and went into the real estate business in Connecticut. They made a fortune.

The vast majority of dwarfs stand between forty and fifty-four inches tall. (Pygmies, who aren't classified as dwarfs, average around fifty-six inches, and, without exception, inherit their stunted stature.) If one is to believe Ripley's *Believe It or Not* anthology, the smallest dwarf was Pauline Musters of Holland, all of nineteen inches. Fully erect, she could walk under the dining-room table and not even muss her hair. Juan de la Cruz of the Philippines billed himself the world's smallest father; he measured two feet tall. Forty-eight-inch John Louis Roventini gained worldwide fame by serving for forty-one years as a living trademark for Philip Morris Inc.'s cigarettes. His shrill voice was insured for \$50,000, and, for his own protection, his contract forbade that he ride the subway during rush hour. A former New York bellboy, "Johnny" retired last year after millions of calls for "Phil-lip Mor-rees!"

A number of dwarfs, for unknown reasons, start to grow again and, usually in their late twenties or early thirties, attain normal height. Austria's Adam Rainer zoomed from three-foot-ten at the age of twenty-one to seven-foot-two at thirty-two, the most dramatic growth spurt known. Some dwarfs, despite their initial grief over being tiny, are haunted by the prospect of a late spurt. Once they have become oriented to their special adulthood, they are understandably wary of realigning themselves to a new and puzzling scale. Dwarf legend has it that small people lead short lives, and though medical research disproves the idea, life insurance companies tend to believe it; dwarfs complain they have trouble purchasing policies. Le Petit M. Richebourg of Paris lived to the ripe old age of ninety.

For many years dwarfs had few job opportunities outside the field of entertainment. The outbreak of World War II did a lot to change that.

For the first time, they were able to enter aircraft factories, defense plants, shipyards, and government offices, and much to the surprise of employers, they proved capable and dependable workers. Many still work as sales promotional representatives. Meat-packer Oscar Meyer & Co. uses five midgets as "Little Oscars" to peddle its wieners, mostly to taller customers.

"But it would be like an ostrich putting his head in the sand to say job discrimination doesn't persist," says Charles Bedou. "I know of a dwarf rejected for a teaching job because the school board thought she couldn't discipline a class. Another dwarf was turned down for a research job by several drug firms because, they said, he couldn't reach laboratory instruments, which is pretty ridiculous. But people now realize we can do a lot more than was thought. Some jobs are hard for us. Nursing would be difficult, because it involves moving people around. Ditch-digging wouldn't be any good, because a dwarf would have to throw the dirt a lot farther from the bottom of a six-foot hole. But dwarfs are doctors, lawyers, truck drivers, elevator operators, some even work in light construction."

Since among disabilities dwarfism seems one of the hardest to face, many parents of sufferers tend to react quite strongly to it. "When a dwarf is born into a family, the typical reaction is one of shock, almost a reaction of mourning for the perfect child who didn't come," says Joan Weiss, a social worker for the Moore Clinic, the nation's leading dwarfism research center and a unit of Johns Hopkins Medical Center. "The parents, especially the mother, tend to treat a dwarf as a living family skeleton. If the dwarfed child's father and mother are inhibited in their parental roles by their disappointment and sense of failure, the child will not be able to develop into an emotionally secure adult, and will regard himself as inadequate and insufficient in measurements other than height." What frequently happens, Mrs. Weiss goes on, is that parents become overly protective of their child, thus deflating his ego. Lee Kitchens, for instance, a Texas engineer, was helped across streets by his mother until he was sixteen. Another dwarf remembers being refused use of the family car while in high school. When he got to college, he holed away enough money to buy a car of his own, and taught himself to drive with help from pedal extensions.

One of the most consuming, and frustrating, interests a dwarf has is finding a mate. Mrs. Weiss says, "Social problems for dwarfs begin about the time they enter the second grade, mostly in the form of physical and verbal teasing. This foments insecurity. Then the second crucial period is in the teens, once puberty is reached, when dwarfs suffer four or five times the dating problems of other teens." A small proportion of dwarfs date, and sometimes marry, people of normal height, though

the LPA reports that the mortality rate of mixed-height marriages is exceedingly high.

Painfully aware of the persistent romantic woes of its members, the LPA sponsors weekend regional conferences (social get-togethers), furnishes members with names of eligible partners, and otherwise intrigues to throw together potential spouses. Three quarters of the married couples in the organization met as a result of this planning. Perhaps the most anticipated event on a dwarf's social calendar is the LPA annual convention, where no one in attendance is more than five feet tall. At the convention, rotated around the country, organizers offer a wide-ranging set of activities—dances, boat rides, shows.

Quite a number of dwarfs, however, refuse to join the LPA; mainly, say LPA people, because they refuse to accept the reality of their abnormal stature. Professor Martin Weinberg of Rutgers, in a study he conducted on dwarfs in 1968, found that many dwarfs believe they are normal in every way, a belief they reinforce by refraining from virtually all social contact with other dwarfs. "Dwarfs who join the LPA have already come to grips with the fact that they have a big problem," Rasa says. "I know one dwarf, immensely talented as a musician, who has closeted herself off from society. It's very sad."

Abnormally undersized persons fall into two general categories, and although as many as seventy-five possible causes of dwarfism have been isolated—hormonal failure, defective genes, bone diseases, inadequate nutrition, to name a few—the common malfunction with both varieties is glandular. In the type known loosely as dwarfs and identified medically as achondroplastic dwarfs, a bone disorder at birth results in a stumpiness of the extremities, a large, globular head, and the powerful torso of a person much taller. Growth plods along at a quarter of an inch a year, rather than the customary two-inch speed. Doctors estimate that more than three quarters of dwarfs are of this type (including the dwarf of Norse mythology). Pituitary dwarfs, commonly known as midgets, are unremarkable at birth, but they cease growing in early childhood, and, though very small, are perfectly proportioned. Midgets rarely grow taller than forty inches.

Many dwarfs marry among themselves, and have children (usually by Cesarean section) who almost always grow to full adult height. A prolific English couple sired fourteen normal children. Some midgets, however, fail to reach puberty, and therefore remain sexually immature. Male voices retain a high pitch. While carnivals often tout midget wrestlers, midgets are almost invariably ineffective grapplers. They are, on the whole, extremely feeble.

One in every few thousand births is a dwarf baby, and doctors reckon that roughly 100,000 Americans are dwarfs. They appear in especially great numbers in cultures which marry only among themselves. The Amish, for example, who prohibit wedlock outside their own bloodlines, have a population that is nearly one percent abnormally undersized. This data comes from Dr. Victor McKusick, head of the Department of Medicine at Johns Hopkins Medical Center, who has studied the Amish and dwarfism at great length. "An island called Krk, off the coast of Yugoslavia, has a high incidence of pituitary dwarfs for the same reason," McKusick says, "and the same is true of a few other places around the world."

Owing partly to The Little People of America, partly to greater interest in clinical genetics, and partly to gratifying results attained in tissue culture work, medical practitioners have recently intensified their examination of the roots of dwarfism. Progress has been painfully slow, and the prognosis is guardedly hopeful, but researchers soldier on.

Some important encouragement has already been offered the slender percentage (less than one percent) of dwarfs plagued by deficiencies of human growth hormone (HGH). HGH is one of eight hormones manufactured by the pituitary gland, an organ no bigger than a pea that sits beneath the brain at the base of the skull. Released into the bloodstream, HGH assists in the complex chemical process of growth. Among other things, it helps the body lasso amino acids needed to build proteins and it raises the level of blood sugar needed for energy. Nothing whatsoever could be done about hypopituitary dwarfs until 1956, when Dr. Maurice Rabin of Tufts University School of Medicine first extracted purified HGH from the pituitaries of cadavers. Since then, HGH injections have stimulated the growth of some 2000 midget children. Some of them have grown as tall as five-foot-five. Mature hypopituitary dwarfs can't be restored in this manner, since their bone cells have already fused and resist stimulation.

Though HGH treatment of dwarfism is a distinguished medical achievement, only HGH from human or monkey pituitaries works, and the supply from these sources is all too limited. Doctors reckon that thousands more midget children would be taller today if the hormone had been more plentiful in the last decade. To get more HGH, a National Pituitary Agency was formed in 1963 by the U.S. Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases and the College of American Pathologists. It has been overseeing an educational campaign to persuade pathologists to save human pituitaries after performing autopsies, and to urge the public to will their pituitaries in the same way they will their eyes and other organs. Human Growth Inc., an educational foundation formed in 1965, largely by

parents and relatives of hypopituitary dwarfs, has been carrying on the same campaign. The real answer, doctors think, probably lies in synthetic HGH. Biochemist C. H. Li of the University of California at Berkeley has done the spadework here. In 1966, he first identified the structure of the HGH molecule—a baffling sequence of 188 amino acids. In 1971, he synthesized the hormone. His product, however, proved only 10 percent as effective as the natural hormone. Dr. Li says that 25 to 50 percent effectiveness can be achieved, and that large-scale treatment would essentially eradicate hypopituitary dwarfism.

“Dwarfism, generally, I think of as rather like running a business,” says Dr. Edmund Murphy, the Moore Clinic’s director. “You need management, materials, and labor. You can think of an absence of pituitary growth hormone as being deficient management, so to speak. You can think of lack of materials as being undernutrition. Then you have shortage of labor. There are people who have abnormal bone structure or cartilage cells, which make them unable to make use of the labor. All we have so far is a cure for deficient management, which, as a cause of dwarfism, is hardly a

big problem at all. So if you’ve got a shoe factory, and you’re plumb out of leather, it does little good to have a great many cobblers at hand.”

Some disproportionate dwarfs plagued by bone disorders have been administered a modified sex hormone called oxandrolone, which is far more abundant than HGH. It is also far less effective. Continuing to frustrate medical science is the considerable task of identifying the cause in a specific case of dwarfism, a process which in many instances requires years. In fact, in certain extremely rare cases, the origin can be entirely psychological. This disorder is known as the emotional deprivation syndrome, in which children cease growing because of a home environment stripped of love. Such children are brought to hospitals, where loving nurses stimulate growth. When they return home, growth stops.

On the whole, dwarfs have refrained from placing all their hopes on medicine. “We are willing to accept our deficiencies, and to make the best of them,” says Charles Bedou. “When people stare at me—and they invariably do—I make out that it’s more curiosity than anything else. Let them look.” □

IN SWITZERLAND

Solzhenitsyn puts on his glasses.

He has flowers in his hand.

He runs toward the plane, jumps up the steps
like a young man.

A camera in the plane pushes up close
to show the man and wife
hugging and embracing in the plane,
many small quick kisses.

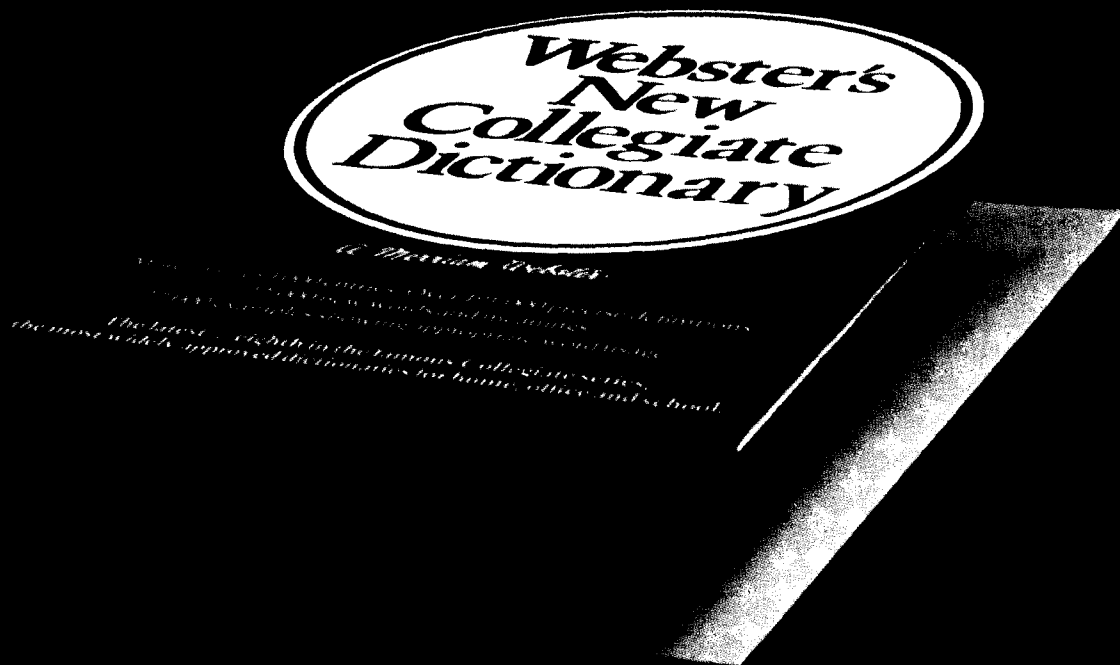
The reporter says; still, it is a bit flat.
Leaving her homeland was obviously bitter for her.
They embrace, they embrace in Switzerland,
which gave them visas.

We see them driving off in a dark car,
one small son seated on the father’s knee,
a hand stroking and stroking his head.
For hours the hand travels over

the valleys and villages, the rivers and forests,
the hills and wheat-fields of the child’s head.

by Michael Dennis Browne

rip-off



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PEKING: HEART OF ASIA

by Ross Terrill

"Change" in the Far East has been measured in recent years in terms of economics. In Peking, change must be assayed in broader terms. It is social, psychological, and political. And, says the author, "The way Peking changes is a clue to China's condition." Here is a profile of the Chinese capital.



In Peking you feel at once the dry air and sense the high, open sky of north China. The light is soft, not a relentless glare as in steamy south China. The bone-dry texture of Peking days makes for physical well-being. You hardly need the statistics which show Peking folk to be highly resistant to epidemics. Only look around at the razor eyes and the silky complexions.

Not that every face in the streets is a Peking one. The capital is a magnet drawing people from all China. They come for work or meetings, on behalf of their province or as a step up from a previous local post. The "floating population" from out of town is almost half a million, and the four thousand eating houses have plates to satisfy every Chinese culinary taste. "Fragrant chicken" of Kiangsu; "red-sauce" meat of Fukien; dishes of Tibet, Mongolia, of the Moslem people.

But the city's reach is more than territorial. Peking is perhaps the one city in the world that presumes to relate itself to the cosmos. The Temple of the Sun was built in the eastern city. The Temple of the Moon faced it from the west. To the Temple of Heaven, in the south, emperors would go to pray for a good harvest. On a north-south axis lay most of the great buildings, facing south to snare maximum sunlight. Even ordinary houses made this same arrangement with nature; their best rooms faced south to a courtyard.

Pekinese have been for centuries—and still are—as much oriented to "east" and "west" as to "left" and "right." Taxi drivers talk of turning north; they enter a street from its "west mouth." The winds have a say in where factories are built. Since the main winds come from the north and the northwest, the city government has steered new industry east and south of the city center—to cut down air pollution.

Longtime residents of Peking seem part of the city, as the city seems part of nature. They dwell in the shadow of a rich past. It is a place, someone has said, "where ghosts might walk with men." This lends a touch of class to Peking.

Not only the elite of Peking have a sense of history about their city. Like a tangible mist, Peking's culture touches every resident with its cloying power. In old Peking, the man in the street had a cultural pride, as if by osmosis or inheritance. Even more so today is Peking's culture pervasive; as everyday energy, as an awareness of quality. The very walk of a Peking man—erect, unhurried, square-footed—expresses his assured place in the large compact of things. Living in Peking confers status, even in the People's Republic of China.

This prestige has its reasons. Pekinese share walls and willows with Chairman Mao, as great a leader as China has ever had. They speak the Chinese accent—once called Mandarin or "Peking speech," now known as "ordinary speech"—which the whole country is required to master. The hands

of their watches show a time which, despite China's five-thousand-kilometer breadth, the whole nation must call its own.

People in other cities of China do their part to sustain Peking's prestige. They look up to "China's capital, Peking," as they term it. During the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards in the provinces, alienated from the establishment as they were, marched off in good faith to "tell Peking" their views. During the recent campaign against the influence of Confucius and Lin Piao, citizens from Dairen traveled to Peking, expressly to register their grievances in wall posters which they stuck plaintively to the gate of the Peking city government. It was like coming to address a trusted elder whose nobility would guarantee a fair hearing.

Peking folk speak of the city as if it were a personification of authority. To me, as a foreigner, Peking exudes another kind of authority: it is Asia's last big-league holdout against the seduction of Western civilization.

There are several "Asias" which are mirror images of a particular Western impact. A British Asia, where London used to rule, English is widely spoken, and ready access is given British religion, ideas, and products; a French Asia; also, since World War II, an American Asia.

Peking is outside the West's tamed Asia. It looks up to nobody, rests content with its own values and culture. Not foreign products, but Chinese, fill the fast-selling spots in the department stores. No Pekinese, planning a fine meal or a special occasion, would choose a cuisine other than China's own. Peking intellectuals do not make their high flights in a Western tongue; it is considered enough for a Chinese sage to express himself in Chinese.

In the present era of the West's decline in Asia, China emerges carrying the torch of Asia's confidence in itself. Peking, which was never really part of the "Asias," turns out to be the heart of Asia.

It is 11:00 P.M.—a late hour in Peking—as I leave the New Traveler Hotel in old Legation Street where I have been drinking ginseng wine with a journalist friend. The summer night is soft and I decide to return on foot to my own hotel, the Nationalities. The two hotels lie east and west of the main public buildings of Mao's Peking. An hour's walk shows me much of "new state Peking."

Flashes of lightning make Tian-an men Square seem like a vast white skating rink, its big surrounding buildings like pink hills. Built during the early Ming, the square has been the heart of em-

pire, republic, and people's republic alike. It is China's national emblem; the motif on the Chinese airline's air tickets; the "red sun" in people's hearts. It is Peking's flat smooth stomach.

During the Great Leap Forward (1958), Tian-an men Square was rebuilt and enlarged from twenty-seven acres to a hundred acres. A staggering ten thousand trees were planted around it. Graceful willows, solid pines, maples with a rosy surprise up their sleeves for the autumn.

As one series of jumps within the Leap, Peking put up ten new buildings in ten months, to celebrate ten years of liberation. Most of the "triple ten" projects are near the square. The entire skyline of Peking today is made up of new public buildings, including the clocks of the railway station, the spire of the TV center, the Agricultural Exhibition Center, the Cultural Palace of Nationalities, the red star on top of the Military Museum.

Emperors used to hand down edicts at the northern fringe of the square, near the palace moat. An edict was held in the mouth of a gold-painted wooden phoenix. Down from the Gate of Heavenly Peace the bird was lowered. A mandarin of the Board of Rites took the edict on a tray decorated with clouds and carried it off to be copied on yellow paper and sent to every corner of China.

Here I am at the moat, and it is still called Golden Water River as under the Ming. Edicts are handed down these days through the *People's Daily* rather than a golden phoenix. Ceremony is still frequent, and now an affair of the masses. A streak of lightning suddenly turns the paving beneath my feet into a silver lake. Each flat square flagstone has a number on it. So *that* is why China's parades go like clockwork!

On the square's eight-hundred-meter eastern flank, where the old Board of Rites and Board of Astronomy stood, I pass two new museums. Both the Museum of Chinese History (up to 1840) and the Museum of the Chinese Revolution (since 1840) were part of the "triple ten" project, shooting up during 1959 like mushrooms after spring rain.

They are done in the quite pleasing style of new state Peking. Long (three hundred meters) in relation to height (forty-five meters), they do not chop off the view, or take away Tian-an men Square's sense of deep space. They match the Great Hall of the People, which faces them from the western flank, where the Court of Censors and Board of Punishments used to be. Pink granite at the base; fawn walls relieved by simple colonnades; up-turned eaves of green- and gold-glazed tile.

The Great Hall of the People was the star of the "triple ten" spasm. It can hold a meeting of ten thousand delegates, mount a dinner party for five thousand, provide a chic salon for a quiet interview. There is an air of the grandness of public life inside this Parthenon of new China.

Ross Terrill, a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*, is a native Australian who teaches at Harvard. This excerpt is drawn from his forthcoming book, *Flowers on an Iron Tree: Five Cities of China*.

Once I used the hall's southern entrance for a meeting with Kuo Mo-jo, China's top cultural politician. I came in from a lobby; he glided in from behind a curtain the height of a theater stage. As we stood for photos in front of a wrought-iron landscape in Anhwei style, Mr. Kuo explained that the hall has at least one room decorated in the style of each of China's provinces. For our conversation a small room of bare elegance had been chosen. Thick rug of cherry red; paneled walls; drapes of golden silk. Deep wicker armchairs for Kuo Mo-jo and myself, as well as for three people writing down what we said.

On another occasion, for a session with Premier Chou, we entered from the north door. It seems so far from the south door—310 meters, in fact—that you feel you are in a different part of Peking. Things are on a grander scale at this end. Up the big flight of steps which Chinese architects still consider essential. Corridors; chandeliers; red carpets.

The Premier was not quite ready, so we waited in an anteroom the size of a basketball court, its wooden doors like lofty pines. The room for the session itself is not one of the Great Hall's biggest, but it is immense. From our seats the photographers and tea girls against the walls seemed like miniature figurines. Sunk in a wicker chair, I had the sense of sitting on a deck chair at the beach.

New state Peking is everything that old dynastic Peking was not. Its buildings are fairly high; the old city was very low. They are only half Chinese in style; roofs alone identify them with their dynastic sisters. Inscriptions used to be allusive ("Pavilion of Pleasant Sounds"). Today they are direct and assertive ("People Alone Are the Motive Force of History"). They used to evoke a purely Chinese range ("Salute the Son of Heaven"). Now an international strain has entered ("Working Class of the Whole World Unite!").

The buildings of new state Peking seem to point beyond themselves to something else that is new: the creation in China of a state mentality. During most of the dynasties the Chinese were not a very state-conscious people. They were led by an emperor; image of a family head writ large. They were bossed by mandarins; image of cultural gurus, rather than political operators.

This new Peking is made of transformed values as well as piles of smooth fawn marble. The family; the pull of a ripe culture—these are still strong bonds. But lying over them, squeezing them into new patterns, is the new entity of a national state bent on reforming the old society.

It is near midnight as I reach the northern side of the Great Hall of the People. The hundred-acre square looks even vaster than usual as lamplight reflects from sheets of rainwater on the flagstones. Red Flag limousines—the premier Chinese brand—are lined up at the steps to the hall, their chauff-

eurs smoking in groups. Smaller Shanghai cars come and go, bearing documents or lesser officials. Under way is the round of meetings leading up to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) Tenth Congress.

There is a small stir as a woman comes out the northern door, attended by half a dozen aides. It appears to be Chiang Ch'ing, wife of Mao Tse-tung. Chauffeurs stub out cigarettes, dissolve their groups, polish the already gleaming bodies of their long black vehicles. The woman strides to her curtained Red Flag, is whisked away with a body-guard seated beside the driver.

A flutter of self-importance surrounds the Great Hall as plans are laid for the congress. It is a special moment for new state Peking. Low-key, done at night—like so many political things in China—and with the feel of steel about it. Firm hands have a grip on China, and the present is a political age par excellence.

For the people this means that they are not only fathers or daughters, and sharers in the ability to read and write Chinese characters, but also citizens of a new Leviathan. They do not goggle from a distance at the golden phoenix; they join in and shout slogans at Tian-an men's orchestrated rallies.

The city of Peking is unusual for having its highest buildings mostly on the fringes. Except for new state Peking, the center is low as well as flat. Homes are one story; shops rarely more than two.

I am referring here to the forty square kilometers of Peking which used to be ringed by walls and a dozen gates. The northern part was called the Inner City (Nei-cheng); foreigners knew it as the Manchu or Tartar City. The southern part was called the Outer City (Wai-cheng); to foreigners, the Chinese City.

Two factors explain why central Peking became a low gray jumble flecked with palaces. Within the Inner or Manchu City lay the Imperial City. The Imperial City, in turn, enclosed the Forbidden City, China's White House. No emperor since the Mongols would allow anyone to build a home which might overshadow the emperor's.

And Peking bourgeois liked courtyards and privacy. Anyone who built a tall house would be able to see into the courtyard of his neighbors—unacceptable to all concerned. The middle classes built antisocial homes. Rooms issued onto a courtyard; a blank wall was turned to the outside world.

Even today the architectural staple of inner Peking—one can hardly call it downtown Peking—remains these Ming and Manchu houses. But they are old vessels into which new wine is being poured.

Each house used to serve one family circle; each courtyard was a sibling's hearth. Today such a house has become a locality. It is no longer the preserve of one family, but a slice of rebaked Pe-

Peking: Heart of Asia

king society. Half a dozen nuclear families live where one extended family once lived. Working-class folk have taken over courtyard living from the middle classes, and they have made it communal instead of tribal.

Here is a neighborhood called West Eternal Peace, a cluster of streets close to the Boulevard of Eternal Peace. Morning sunshine lights up the yellow tiles of the old Imperial Palace as I leave the boulevard and enter the lanes of a residents' area within the neighborhood.

Most of these homes are a century old. In gray brick with red lacquered doors and pillars, they resemble smoky cats with bright bows at the neck. Latticed windows reach high to eaves decorated with tableaus of birds. They are filled with paper (glass is a new thing in China) which is replaced twice a year. Roofs are made of U-shaped, overlapping gray tiles, Spanish in appearance except that the gable is not so sharply angled.

Mr. Cha of West Eternal Peace's office leads me into a courtyard of his choice. It is large and yet cozy. Spaced around the flagstones are flowers in porcelain pots. Fruit trees twist their way toward the block of light offered by the courtyard. In the middle there is an old well with a pump. Over raised thresholds, heavy brown doors lead to half a dozen single-family apartments.

Some families have roots in early Manchu times. This single dynasty, it takes an effort to recall, runs back as far as the English settlement of America. West Eternal Peace's five factories occupy converted houses from the Manchu. Their workers, 78 percent of them women, make buttons and do tailoring; they fold book leaves; they make locks and magnetic motors for farm implements.

Civic pride seems high. A woman died not long ago, leaving the husband with four children, aged three to nine. The man did not have to devise an individual scheme for coping, since the residents' committee pitched in with a plan. X would cook a meal for the family three times a week. Y would mind the small child. Z would keep an eye on the household's sewing needs.

When I remark that the stone yards and dirt lanes are clean, Cha tells me about garbage collection. As well as penalties against a household that does not put out its rubbish daily, there is a cunning rule to prevent smell and litter in the lanes. Garbage cans may only be brought to the lane once the streetlights go on (pickup is soon after).

I ask to choose another courtyard for myself. We wander into one that turns out to be similar to the first. In fact we hit upon a man with a very high salary, a cadre in the Bank of China's head office. He brings home 150 yuan a month, spends four yuan of it for the rent of his three tasteful rooms. (I see only two rooms, one very big, but Cha points to the ceiling, where a beam runs across the waist of the large room. "In Peking we always

count rooms *by the beam*."") The rent, which includes water and electricity, is extra low and I ask Cha about it.

His answer gives an interesting glimpse of Peking's housing setup. Most houses are owned by the municipality's Bureau of Real Estate Administration. (With its branches in each of Peking's six urban districts, it employs thirty thousand people, has its own training college.) But a sprinkling of houses are owned by work units, like this one belonging to the Bank of China. The rent for these homes is cheaper.

The banker smiles with modest pleasure when we talk about his good housing deal. Cha and I move out from the living room, lined with more than a fair share of Chairman Mao's works, into the well of sunlight which is the courtyard. A child is ready to sing us a song, but Cha turns to me with a further remark. "Before the Cultural Revolution," he says quietly, "most of Peking's houses, except for those owned by a work unit, were privately owned."

We enter the lane with a cortege of kids behind us. I say nothing—I am not sure of Cha's opinion about the change in house ownership—but Cha resumes. "During the Cultural Revolution the houses were handed over. But maybe they will be handed back." I bend down to shake the hand of a tot who has broken away from a game of jumping-the-rubber-band to present me with a flower. I am eager to let Mr. Cha say what he wants to say. "You know," he adds, "the constitution of China permits private ownership—have you read it carefully?" He looks at me with a steady eye. "It is now being discussed whether homes should go back to private ownership."

A knock on the door and in bounces Wang Hsi, deputy editor of China's worldwide weekly, *Peking Review*. I had asked for the meeting, having found Miss Wang on a previous occasion to be frank and amusing. Usually one interviews people at their place of work or in a reception room; certainly I did not expect Wang Hsi to come rapping at my room in the Nationalities Hotel. It is a sign of the relaxed air of 1973.

Miss Wang is fifty-six, stocky, gregarious. She has no airs and could pass as readily for a bus conductor as for an editor. Working as a journalist on a magazine sent abroad, she is more aware of foreign ways than the average Chinese cadre.

Wang Hsi has charge of the *Peking Review* before it is translated into English, French, Spanish, German, and Japanese. Not published in Chinese, the *Review* began in English only in 1958 (successor to *People's China*), added the extra tongues later. It sells 200,000 copies in its five editions, 10,000 of these in the United States.

I ask about her view of America. Hawaii in-

trigues her, sympathetic halfway house between the United States and Asia. She once wrote these words about it: "Only after visiting Hawaii did I get a deeper understanding of the time-honored friendship between the Chinese and American peoples."

Drugs, unemployment, the surge of religious feeling. Wang Hsi raises these U.S. phenomena with an air of wonder, as an American might take note of the alien laws of gravity on the moon. It had stuck in her mind that one U.S. worker likened to a "lottery" the chances of getting on in America. But editor Wang's main point about the United States concerns her trip there in the spring of 1973, and comes as a small bombshell.

She begins with a question: "Is America really so dangerous that the Secret Service has to protect Chinese visitors every moment of the day?" Then she launches into a discussion of "overprotection" that could have dropped from the lips of many an American visitor to China.

"In New York they forbade us to ride the subway. We only met people at receptions and banquets. I never sat down with a single blue-collar worker. Here we are, you and I, chatting like two friends in your hotel room. In the United States this was impossible for us. The State Department was, I suppose, trying to be hospitable. We were disappointed."

Wang Hsi brings me up to date on the froth and bubble of life in Peking. The affectionate prefix "old"—as in "Old Chen" or "Old Teng"—is no longer used only for men, but is just as common now as the term of address for an older woman. Yes, it's true that an egg costs the same, nine to twelve fen, whether you buy it raw in the shell, or cooked and ready to eat. As a new antipollution step, separate chimneys for heating individual buildings are on the way out, in favor of a few vast central heating systems in key districts. At middle schools, boarding and "busing" are far less common than before the Cultural Revolution, and schools now serve only their immediate environs.

Politics is not Miss Wang's cup of tea, but she has her views. Here she is summing up Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao: "Look, they were both the same, as far as I am concerned—they departed from socialism."

But isn't it hard to know ahead of time what is a departure from socialism? "I have that same problem," comes the matter-of-fact response. "I had not considered Liu's *How To Be a Good Communist* a bad book. Then our *Review* ran a piece criticizing it; I saw things I had not seen before. Such is the power of revolutionary criticism."

When I meet the political writer Hu Sheng, he tells me it is the first time he has received a scholar from a foreign university. Though not visible to foreigners—he has traveled hardly at all ex-

cept for lengthy trips in Russia—Hu Sheng has been one of the CCP's leading propagandists: deputy director of the Propaganda Department of the Party, a top man at *Red Flag* magazine, writer of important works of history, influential voice in the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences.

We sit among electric fans and tea mugs in a reception room of the Nationalities Hotel. Hu is above middle age, slow and polite in gesture, with a stiff bearing more common in Prussia than in China. A native of Kiangsu, he has the flat face of east China, and eyes that are big, expressive, easily amused. There are moments when he simply gazes at me and offers a smile in place of an answer.

One reason I wanted to see Hu was that his book *Imperialism and Chinese Politics* is one of the works published in Peking that I most frequently suggest to students at Harvard, and some of his articles in *Study* (a forerunner of *Red Flag*) and *Historical Research* have been much discussed in China and abroad.

Winds of change have blown over China since Hu wrote these things. Hu fell from favor during the Cultural Revolution. He tells me that *Imperialism and Chinese Politics* is now a "reference book"—which means it has errors. This does not lessen my interest in his opinions. And I want to know what is wrong with his book.

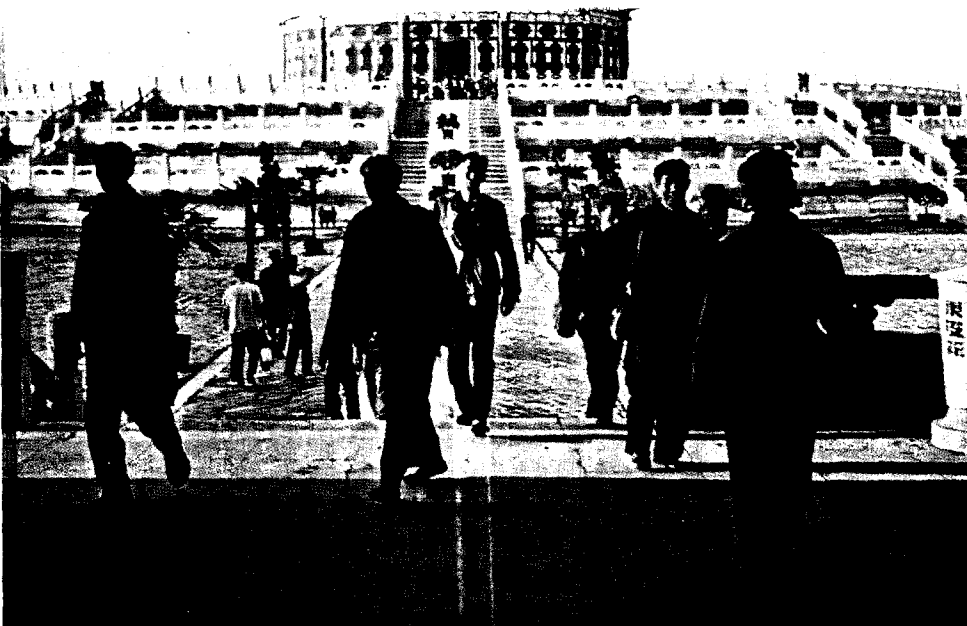
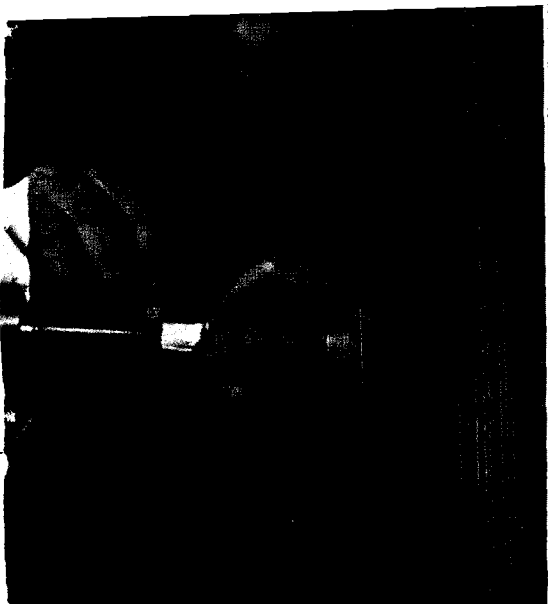
Hu coolly remarks that Marx's five stages of historical development are not always fulfilled. "In China, for example, some of our minorities have gone directly from slave society to socialist. No feudal or capitalist stage in between. Marx did not predict it, but it has happened." This does not make Hu believe in a special Asian mode of development. Marx's laws "basically" apply to the whole world.

If this is a wavering from strict Marxism, it is Hu's only one. I soon feel, in fact, that Hu is an old-fashioned Marxist, that this fidelity itself brought him troubles after the split with Moscow, and especially after 1965.

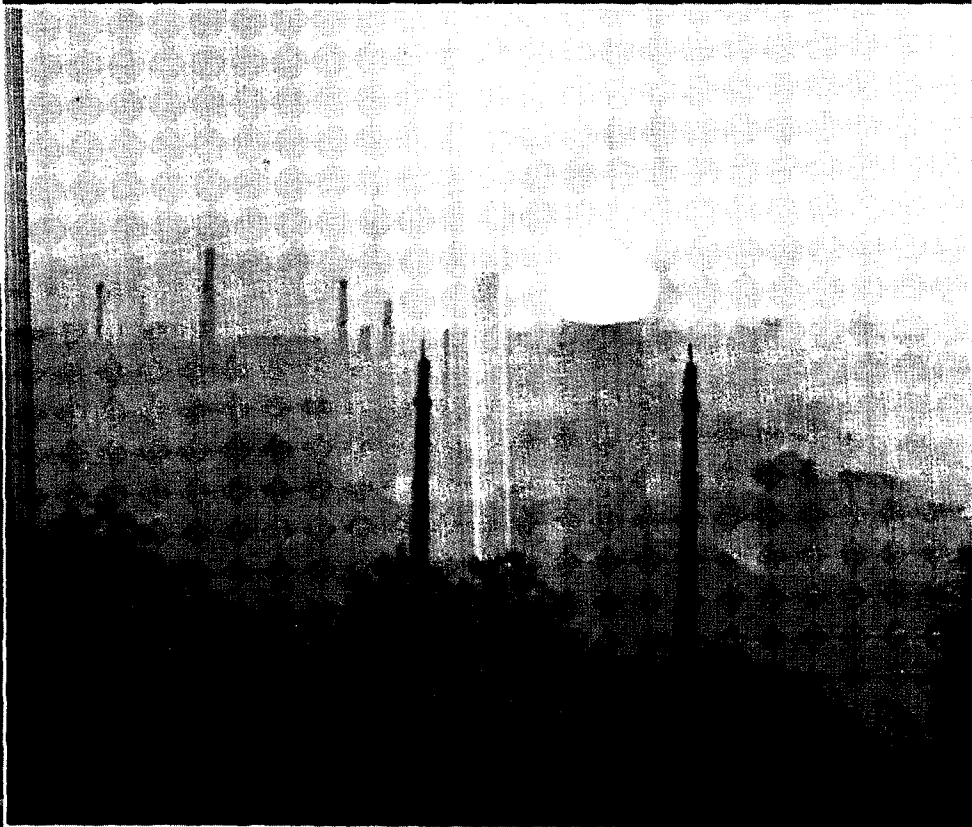
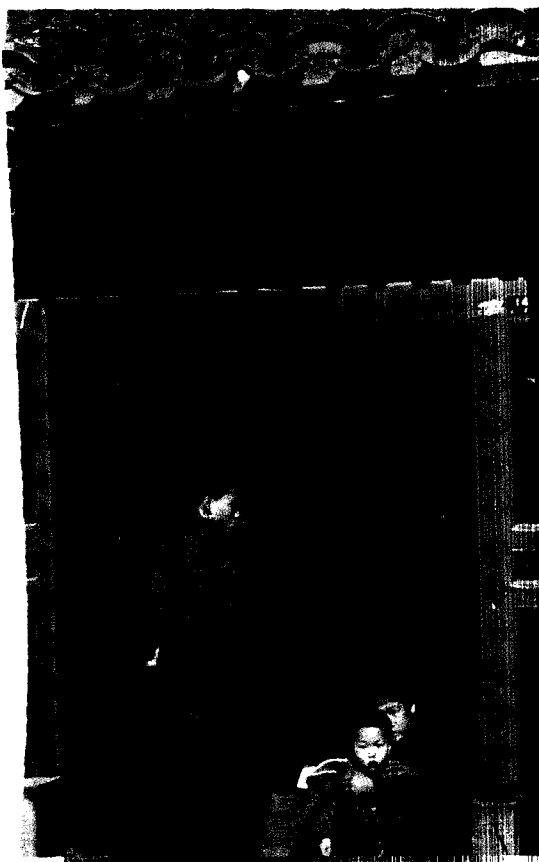
His book, written in Hong Kong during 1947, deals with imperialism in China from the Opium War until the 1920s. What about the decades since; where is the cutting edge of imperialism today? This does not lead Hu to attack "social imperialism" (Russia) as one might expect. It is U.S. imperialism on which he concentrates.

I tell Hu Sheng that I have been struck by a relative soft-pedaling on Japan in his writings about China's suffering from imperialism. "When I wrote a lot of that," he replies, "during the late 1940s, Japan's imperialism had become clear to all. Not enough attention, though, was being paid to rising U.S. imperialism."

Two days before, Chang Wen-chin, Assistant Foreign Minister, made the same point to me about the late 1940s, but he went on to say:



Clockwise from the top: Peking factory worker; Temple of Heaven; Peking's industrial area; the South Gate of the Forbidden City; in Tian-an men Square; entrance to a Peking home.



"From the late 1960s, the rising imperialism is that of the Soviet Union. Asian people were slow in the 1940s to see that America was the new problem; now they are slow to see that America is past its peak and Russia is the ambitious one." But Hu Sheng does not draw this parallel.

Hu had been criticized before for mechanical interpretations. For being too tough on the Boxers, whose movement he called a "perversion." Too unappreciative of the policies of "national and race salvation" of the 1898 reformers. Too rigidly opposed to private enterprise (in some 1952 articles about the "Five Anti" movement). His plodding, 1950s-type Marxism was apparently called too close to the Soviet line during the Cultural Revolution.

Now I ponder most carefully Hu's words. For on the occasion of National Day, 1974, Hu Sheng sprang back to favor. At a grand reception in the Great Hall he, along with other key "revisionists," made his first reported public appearance since the Cultural Revolution. Then in January, 1975, Hu was not only a delegate at the National People's Congress (China's parliament) but was elected to its standing committee. An interesting straw in the wind.

If Tian-an men Square is Peking's stomach, Eternal Peace Boulevard is a belt drawn across it. North of the square and a little east of the former Imperial Palace lies another old commercial quarter. Its core street is Wang-fu-jing (Well of the Princes' Residences). The Wang-fu-jing, Peking's largest department store, has the informal air of a church bazaar. It serves each day 100,000 customers, whose purses are fatter in 1973 than they used to be. Goods are more various; shopping baskets are fuller; the counters are more crowded than two years ago. A long line of people wait to buy sets of festive electric light bulbs in multiple colors. I am tempted only by a pair of crisscross Peking sandals, the most comfortable kind I know.

Eastern Market sells seventeen thousand kinds of products, including single socks, gloves, and shoes. The stalls are better stocked and laid out than two years ago. But the secondhand book section is a shadow of what I recall from 1964. The foreign books are mostly dictionaries and technical manuals, with a scattering of noncontroversial titles such as *Familiar Trees of Hopei* by F. H. Chow.

North of Lantern Market Street and Pig Market Street, the establishments are less solid, even scraggy. There are curbside markets which are a whirl of apples, babies, cabbages, bicycles. The leathery faces of farmers, up from a commune to sell their fruit, stand out from the pale radiant Peking faces.

The boss of one little mart is about seventy but firm and energetic. A long black apron reaches al-

most to his bare spindly ankles, which shine like lizard skin. Above his darting eyes a bald strip runs back between two close-cropped sides of an oval head. He dispenses pears and peppers with the speed of a computer, calling out their virtues as he does so.

A store that will sell a single sock! Is this a supreme badge of poverty? To me, it is at any rate a badge of China's high standard of practical, flexible service. Shops have been relocated so that the people in most residential areas are very close to whatever they might need. Opening hours are adjusted to suit the work patterns of the neighborhood. There are shops-on-wheels, mounted on pedicabs, which visit out-of-the-way lanes. Shops are not allowed to raise prices just because demand soars.

No simple item exists that you cannot get repaired in Peking. Things lost in this city of seven million can often be retrieved at lost-and-found depots run by Public Security. Some theaters carry flexibility to the point of selling tickets on the basis of small time segments—two fen per ten minutes—so that patrons can come and go as mood and schedule require. Peking even sent to Shanghai for tailors, hairdressers, cleaners, window dressers, to lift services to Shanghai's unbeatable level.

Buses have a "Suggestion Book" hanging on the wall. Conductors call out the time when they announce a destination, and they are trained to live up to the proud slogan "Every Conductor a Walking Map." The Peking consumer, in brief, is by no means an unheeded victim of Moscow-type bureaucracy.

Through a small wooden door in Wang-fu-jing I find my way to the Bright and Flowery Bathhouse. It is a refreshing spot after shopping or on the way home from work. The blackboard by the entry is scrawled with a complex list of services available, many of which I cannot decipher. A well-scrubbed boy of fifteen rescues me, leads me through glass doors and up a stone staircase. Little Ma (as he introduces himself) swings a small cloth and whistles an aria from *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. Into a small bathroom he puts me and says it will be "comfortable and convenient."

But this is not what I have come for; my hotel has such a Western bath. I ask Ma to slow down his rapid Shensi accent. We consult. Soon I have a ticket for the Public Room (thirty fen), which turns out to be a big clean hall with sixty or seventy bathers.

Little Ma seems pleased, after all, that I have chosen to join the masses. Dozens stare with interest and amusement as he shows me around with grand gestures. Finally he leads me to my couch and leaves me with two towels.

Each bather has a wooden couch draped in a

Peking: Heart of Asia

towel. There are cloths, sandals, and a teapot on a small table beside the couch. Each bather also has a locker for valuables; an attendant keeps the key.

The hall accommodates three long double rows of couches and there is, I find later, a similar hall downstairs. It is all modern; Little Ma says Bright and Flowery was built after Liberation (1949). Corridors lead off to other rooms for massage, haircutting, foot care, laundry—done in the time it takes you to bathe and rest.

My feet half in straw sandals that are too small, I go to the bath itself. The scene is one of steam, soapsuds, brown bodies tinged pink with the heat. I slip off the sandals, hang up my towel, take a shower before choosing a pool. There are three pools: Warm, Hot, Most Hot.

Little Ma rushes up to suggest I do not try Most Hot. I have already made a mental note to the same effect. Six or seven people lie around in both Warm and Hot, smiles of well-being on their faces. Most Hot has only one, a wizened old guy who seems to be making a supreme effort to stay in the water. Heat waves rise from the surface in slow undulations.

For a long time I wallow in Warm and Hot—not even a foot will agree to stay in Most Hot—and watch the action. Here are two pals about eighteen years old, one a factory worker and the other a middle-school student. At the Warm pool they scrub each other's backs. Later they read comic books on their couches.

A middle-aged man comes in who is not a manual worker. His hands are soft, he walks with a certain dignity, he is not in good shape. He is with a lithe youth, who soaps him down as he lies on the edge of the Hot pool.

One thing is clear about age differences at Bright and Flowery. The older men are smaller than the younger. It is not just that some are wizened and shrunken; that some betray malformations (a limp, a spine problem). The young workers and students are simply bigger in stature.

Soft and pink I retire to my couch. It is the custom to linger. There is no extra charge if you stay a long time or use more towels. Some swathe themselves in a towel and sleep. A group near me lie smoking cigarettes and chatting from their couches.

A few read books but no one has a newspaper. A man of forty across the aisle is absorbed in *Red Flag*, which I have rarely before seen anyone in China reading. He may be a cadre; hard to tell in the reclining naked state.

There is an air of peace and renewal. No trace of tension in the room; a pleasant chance to converse. But the accents are often thick. Are these men out-of-towners, cleaning up, perhaps, during a few hours' stopover at the Peking railway station? I meet one such, but many are regulars. The majority are working-class; sunburn marks follow the line of their undershirt straps.

One evening I go to another bathhouse in the cramped lanes outside Front Gate. I am fiercely massaged by a grinning giant from Liaoning. He talks at me as I grit my teeth. The bathhouse, Great Fragrant Garden, closed up, he says, for eighteen months during the Cultural Revolution. "There were criticisms," he declares as he stands triumphant on my spine. "We came in every day and discussed things. But there were no customers."

Some people in Hong Kong are surprised when they hear about bathhouses in Peking today. They had thought the CCP put an end to them. In fact the only thing that has gone in China's bathhouses—standard in Hong Kong's—is the service of being soaped and scrubbed by a bath-boy. Replacing this in Peking, it seems, is the custom of friends washing each other.

The steamy informality of Bright and Flowery and Great Fragrant Garden gives the foreigner a fresh angle on Peking. He will enter few homes in a purely social way. The bathhouse is the best place I know to relax with ordinary folk, without prior arrangement or agenda. The PRC (People's Republic of China) naked, after all, is not less a part of Chinese life than the PRC on parade.

Let us go to Peace Zone (He-ping li), one of ten neighborhoods in East City district. Here is a new Peking, on which nostalgia lays no claim. Before Liberation it was wasteland; today it is an industrial suburb of sixty-five thousand moderns. The veterans among its population were all in service trades before 1949. Now most of the people in Peace Zone's twenty-three residents' areas work in machine plants and textile mills.

In the east, and to a degree in the southeast and west, Peking has become what it never seemed cut out to be: an industrial city. It is home to 1.2 million factory workers. It offers employment to thirteen times the people it did twenty-five years ago. Its industrial production has leapt up a hundred times since then. Can these rows of blocks and chimneys still echo Peking's old self-understanding?

Within a year of the CCP victory Peking had changed in spirit and organization. Civic pride arose as if from thin air; a net of control fell over each citizen; streets were cleaned up and began to buzz with purpose. Because they impeded traffic, the city walls were torn down, and most of the gates too. New round-the-city roads were built, which "checkerboard" Peking hadn't known before. Public transport took a quantum jump forward; a mere 164 vehicles in 1949 has turned into 2500 (trams losing out en route to buses and trolleys).

Columns of smoke soon announced that Peking, for the first time in its highly political history, was making steel, chemicals, machines, cotton yarn. The city no longer had to buy all needed manufac-

tures, except handicrafts, from Shanghai and Tientsin. Each year new products appear. Among the latest in the light industry area are ultra-high-pressure xenon lamps and a durable fabric which is part polyester and part goat hair.

Completely new, too, are the five- and six-story housing blocks, into which 700,000 Peking households have moved. The new blocks have wrought a revolution in the daily life of Peking man.

Residents used to courtyard living find themselves thrown together, yet in a way more alone than before. For lucky families who had a lot of space, the old homes were wells of privacy. The new blocks have no walls to keep out the eyes and cries of neighbors.

Yet for ordinary families the new blocks give more room space than they had before enjoyed. Modern apartment living helps make them true individuals, encourages a sense of oneself, an awareness of capacity, a feeling that there is an open path ahead. Links with other people are broader, more arbitrary, more stimulating. And rents have come down. Twenty fen (10 cents) per square meter is the standard rate, which finds the average family paying only 6 percent of its income on rent.

As factories and apartments went up, the *People's Daily* spoke of a "great high tide of Industrial Revolution." Such a mood does stalk these avenues of brick oblongs, blue overalls, young trees. Here is the buoyancy of a generation that by its own hand has changed its way of life. Here, too, is a certain parochialism and self-preoccupation, as these newly moderns delight in things which are taken for granted in most big industrial cities.

There is a sense of involvement in what has been achieved, which is the result of endless mutual consultation. No more does the Chinese worker do only what he is ordered to do. Told the purpose of what's going on, he gets prizes and publicity if he suggests useful improvements. "Exchange of technique" meetings give the worker a chance to demonstrate to others a new method he has hit upon. He is dared to think, to make connections, to be a poor man's Prometheus.

I sense this participant's pride at Peking General Petrochemical. This plant, started in 1968, refines several million tons of oil a year.

I walk out among pipes and red banners to the unlikely sight of pools of goldfish and Peking ducks in cane pens. There are smiles when I ask how these can stand the polluted environment. "You have seen the point," says a PLA (People's Liberation Army) cadre with a knowing grin, "but upside down." The fish and ducks are the living fruit of ingenious efforts to beat pollution.

The plant emits waste water, the PLA man explains, which contains harmful sulfides and phenols. If allowed to run away it would damage crops and foul rivers. The best way to get rid of

evil, it was reasoned, is to turn evil into good.

Here is a tower where sulfides are removed from the waste water. Over there a cement pool where the residue of oil is skimmed off it—and sent back for refining. Nearby, an aeration tank where compressed air and a flotation agent are added to the water.

The water then flows into pools in which the emulsified oil and flotation agent are scooped off. Still left are the phenols, but with the aid of a rotary beater they are absorbed by microorganisms. Now the water is ready for the fish and ducks, as well as vegetable plots which help feed the plant's workers. Everyone grins with satisfaction as we survey this cunning sequence.

Back at Peace Zone, I find that family patterns have changed out of recognition since Manchu days. Here I am in the neat bright living room of Mrs. Heng. She is a cylindrical woman with a heavy jaw but sparkling eyes. As an official of Peace Zone, Mrs. Heng (her name means "persistent") keeps a finger in many pies and knows the social scene well.

Mrs. Heng says divorces among Peace Zone's fifteen thousand households run at seven to nine per year—still a low rate, because of social pressure to "patch up," and because bad conduct can be explained away as a hangover from the old society. As the divorce rate slowly rises, the birthrate quickly falls. Last year it was eleven per thousand; the district wants it brought down to ten per thousand.

When we talk about unmarried mothers, Mrs. Heng deals me a small shock: "The girl no longer has to kill the child, nor get an abortion unless she wants to." Have I misheard the Chinese terms—confusing killing with aborting? No mistake; Mrs. Heng is harking back to infanticide. She recalls it from her girlhood. "Bathing the baby" was the chilling euphemism for drowning an unwanted infant.

At a stroke I am reminded of the leap Mrs. Heng's generation has taken from feudalism to factory. Hardly to be imagined by the mandarins that an ordinary woman like Mrs. Heng could be an arbiter of social norms and a leader of economic enterprises.

The city that made only handicrafts and specialty goods is now a city whose coinage is machine tools, chemicals, polyester. And what has become of the stagnant dumps of garbage and sewage? They are now a park which resounds to the thump of basketball and the shouts of tots on swings.

I am curious to see South Church (Nan-tang), near the gate called Trumpet the Military. It is Peking's orphan cathedral; the city's only operating Catholic parish.

Inside the gray brick church you see at once how

Peking: Heart of Asia

Christianity in China was cursed with an alien face. Entering the high arched door is like leaving China, going back into a past world of European piety. Saints with white faces; a Western ceiling; stained-glass windows; madonnas with Italian noses.

The most famous Catholic missionary to China, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), lived in a house on this spot, and the first Catholic church in Peking was built here in 1650.

This morning there are fifty-four people in the congregation, sparse like winter leaves against the brown benches and fawn marble panels. Twelve are Chinese. Half of the forty-two foreigners are black Africans. At 9:30 A.M. two priests enter and switch on the lights. Electrically lit candles spring to life on the altar. The Mass begins. From my pew near the back the mumble is quite inaudible. I move twenty rows toward the altar; still all I can tell is that the priest is using a mixture of Latin and Chinese.

The service drawls on with no high or low point. It seems quickly over and we troop out. An offering box stands at the rear of the church; its contents surely cannot maintain even this ghostly parish.

Another morning I look for Peking's Protestant parish. No accident that it is in the Rice Market district, which used to be upper class. A golden sun grips Peking as I set out. Ask a hundred people in the street, but no one has heard of the church. Luckily I know that it is near Red Star Cinema. I clamber on to a bus, buy my ticket, tell the conductress I'm going to Red Star.

As we enter Rice Market Street, she informs me that my stop is near. I alight and soon find myself at the green wrought-iron fence of the church. Although I recognize it, I need to find a proper way of entry. I stop a youth as he comes out of a gate next door. "Is that building a church?" He seems a little nervous as he replies that it is. When I ask about the time of the services, he excuses himself, hops on his bike, pedals off.

Rice Market Church is an old YMCA building in relaxed semi-Chinese style. It is three stories, with airy windows and wide, turned-up eaves in green tile. (The Protestants do not, like the Catholics, have the disadvantage of a Gothic ecclesiastical bastion.)

Suddenly I see a congregation of a dozen or so people quietly coming out of the church's doorway. In a moment I am chatting with the pastor, Yin Chi-chen. Yin used to work with the American Brethren Mission in Shansi province, later with American Presbyterians in Peking.

Pastor Yin briefs me on the 1973 Peking Protestant scene. Apart from Rice Market, all church buildings have been rented to banks, bureaus, welfare agencies. "It is true," says Yin, "that the number of believers is less than ever before, and that most of the Sunday congregation are foreigners.

Maybe there are five hundred believers in Peking." A small seed in a city of seven million. Pastor Yin also points out that since the Cultural Revolution there are no sermons, baptisms, weddings, or funerals at Rice Market Church.

He gives a frank explanation of why the trend of attendance is downward. "So many people are working on Sundays now"—he gestures toward the busy street beyond the gate—"that Sunday is no longer a day for extra activities."

The pastor's last point is a key one. If the Christian church in China seems doomed, the reason lies deeper than the Cultural Revolution, during which Red Guards occupied Rice Market Church and gave political lessons to the parishioners. The church is a dying force since it never took root in the new society.

Chinese Communist friends are always polite about religion. But they quickly sniff—when Westerners show interest in Chinese churches—the old effort by foreigners to remake China's soul. They also point out that toward religions other than Christianity the CCP has been no more hostile than was the Republican government of Chiang Kai-shek (1928-1949). And that the CCP—this is seldom recalled in the West—has been less disdainful of non-Christian religions than were the cocky Christian missionaries.

At the same time, the bleak agony of religion in a Marxist society raises the fundamental issue of individual freedom. A Christian believer may be the final swallow of a sinking summer; he is also a human being. The Bible he would read is not compatible with Marxism; but does it reduce his value as a Chinese citizen if he reads it?

A talk with Pastor Yin leaves an impression of a Christianity which is fading. First, because its ideals have lost their power. (In 1964, a previous pastor had talked with passion about Saint Paul and the Fourth Gospel, but Yin never gets to hard-core religious matters.) Second, because the sociology of new China leaves no niche for a church.

Pastor Yin's predicament is just an extreme form of one shared by Christian clergy in dozens of countries. The church as an organization is ebbing. Christianity evaporates from its institutional vessel, becomes a diffuse world view.

You can think of Peking as an *abstraction*. Peking opens its arms to Sihanouk of Cambodia; Peking does not believe in peace. You can think of the city as a *mecca*. Peking is the red sun of our hearts; Peking will not fail the oppressed peoples of the world.

I have been speaking of Peking as a *functioning city*, as a place where people live, get up in the morning, do the jobs of the 1970s, go to sleep or make love. This Peking does not stand still—whether as implacable monster or shimmering im-

age—but moves on as the result of its own eager zeal to shake off the past.

By 1973 Peking has known interesting changes, compared with my visit of 1971. Wages are up, people spend more. There is almost a big-city atmosphere on the Boulevard of Eternal Peace. It's quite a battle now to cross the road. Mostly bicycles, rather than cars, bar your way, but there are lots of commercial vans and swampy-green Corona taxis from Japan.

Daily life is more relaxed than in 1971. Cardplaying; spitting in the street (or over the back of the chair at a dinner); a tendency to take it easy on the job from time to time. A few museums, a mosque, a church or two have opened their doors again.

At West Eternal Peace neighborhood Mr. Cha is frank about the fate of Mao badges. Why are there no more badges? "In summer we change our clothes often," he first ventures, "so it is not convenient to wear a badge." I gently say that during the summer of 1971, every man, woman, and child wore a Mao badge. Cha smiles and comes to the point: "In those days the political temperature was high; now it is down a bit."

In the eased-up mood there is a tendency to evade responsibility. "The state will decide," says a factory chairman who does not want to commit himself on a question of policy. Who will take the initiative when the crucial signals from on high are unpredictable? The "in" term "responsible person" is a giveaway. If a few leaders in any unit are the "responsibles," the rest by definition do not and cannot take any responsibility.

Before your eyes there takes place an evolution away from the "institutions" of the Cultural Revolution, and toward renewed Party authority over spontaneous impulses. The Communist Youth League eclipses the Red Guards. Trade unions are back. Party cadres dust themselves down after a spell at a correctional school and generally find their desk and chair warm. The PLA has resumed a low profile; no chance is missed to say that the army is under the leadership of the Party.

Few things are more striking after two years than the new official warmth toward Japan. No more talk of Japanese "militarism"; trade and visits are on the rise. One Chinese official, just back from Tokyo where technology had dazzled him, tells me with enthusiasm how the Japanese used *cranes* to whisk away right-wing demonstrators from his Chinese delegation's hotel.

And the issue of the United States has come out from behind the curtain, where it was in 1971, to a central place on Peking's official stage. A lot of the old tension has gone. My U.S. links are no longer a liability. You fly from Canton in a U.S. Boeing instead of a Russian Ilyushin, as before.

It is quite moving to see the Americans in their

liaison office, in busy harmony with a Chinese staff. One looks at the scene and recalls the faith of Mr. Dulles twenty years ago that the CCP government would "pass away." (Peking has the same premier now, Chou En-lai, as it did then.)

Here in a defense shelter at Peking Construction Tool Plant I sniff the new Sino-U.S. atmosphere. Who might attack China, I ask, and the answer is, "Imperialists." But since there are two major types of imperialism, I decide to press my question through a back door. Have any Americans visited this shelter? "Mr. Edgar Snow came here, and later on Mr. Joseph Alsop." Have you had Russian visitors? The chairman of the shelter dismisses the idea crisply: "This place is only for visitors from friendly countries."

The way Peking changes is a clue to China's condition. In most of Asia the changes of the past decade have been economic, especially those which resulted from the movement of the international capitalist economy. Manila gets bigger; Hitachi signs multiply over Taipei; cars are on the increase in Bangkok. The changes I see in Peking are mostly not economic, and the steady development of the economy that has taken place owes nothing to international forces.

The change is *social*: role of women, spread of education, firmer local community. It is *psychological*: students lose their awe for teachers, a feeling of pride in China's new world stature arises, a controlled theater constrains people to embrace the political myths of the CCP. And it is *political*: Mao makes a fresh analysis of America; the PLA is called in and then called off; the high are brought low and the low ushered into their places.

All this is change with a purpose, not change as a result of the onward march of economic mechanism. Some moves have been ill-advised—assigning Red Guard impulse to do the job of Party organization—and have had to be canceled. But the purposive change the CCP brings about speaks strength, independence from fashions and pressures in the world, leadership that uses political power in the service of values, minds that believe society can progress far beyond today's levels.

And it is change that produces not just new *things* but new ways of living in society. Maybe this makes change in Peking more basic—because more self-moving—than change in most of Asia. Some call it the making of a "new man." I do not think the CCP has made a new man. But it has called into being new social circumstances which make men and women able to behave in new ways. This is true social development, beside which all the gadgets of "growth" are dross.

And who cares if communism obviates itself by the self-moving nature of the change it sets in motion. Isms cannot matter as much as the minds and bodies that invent them for a purpose. □



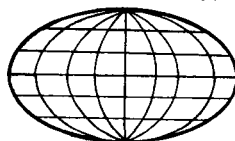
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LIFE & LETTERS

MEMORIES OF A CRAZY MAIONESE MAKER

by G. Franco Romagnoli

Break 2 eggs into the blender's container. Add the juice of 1 lemon, ½ teaspoon salt, a pinch of white powdered pepper, and 4 tablespoons of the 1½ cups of olive oil you have on hand. Check that the blender is plugged in, and from the array of buttons choose the one that says *blend*. Push it down. After 10 seconds, start pouring the olive oil in a steady trickle. Stop pouring only if a little bubble of oil forms in the middle of the vortex. Keep on blending until the bubble disappears, and then resume pouring until all the oil has been added. Blend an additional 5 seconds.



No more than one and a half minutes have elapsed since you began to make the mayonnaise, and now you have a container full. It is good mayonnaise, too. If you used extra-fine virgin olive oil, it is exquisite. But to me, no matter how good, it is not real mayonnaise, not *maionese*.

To make real *maionese*, you have to go back to the wartime Rome I knew. You have to be just edging into adolescence. You have to be living in one of the many apartments of an old *palazzo*, a structure really not so much old as badly aged.

Think of yourself, on a Friday afternoon of early winter, the sky dark much too early, the apartment empty (Papa at work, Mama shopping, your older brother at gym, your younger sister at ballet practice). The windows are streaked by rain and your soul by dampness.

Now listen to Lia's voice beckoning you to the light and warmth of the kitchen. Ah, that was heaven, and making *maionese* a reward. Lia was our Venetian maid, the last our family ever

had. She remained with us until the final cataclysm of the war, when she had to return to her own province. She was in her mid-twenties and a marvelous cook. The fact that she was so hopelessly old did not blind me to the fact that she was very beautiful. Everyone else's eyes were wide open too, and focused.

Having Lia in our family was one of my mother's many wisdoms: if my father and brother (I have never been sure if I was included) had to be exposed to temptation, then let it be under her watchful eyes, where temptation would never be allowed to blossom into sin. A very handsome woman herself, Mama never felt really threatened by competition. Lia was the last of a succession of beautiful maids who had made our household very popular with uncles, cousins, and friends, for it was another of my mother's wisdoms to think that we men (but was I included?) would grow accustomed to feminine charm and beauty, and if, when, and where these graces were to be used as weapons against us, like Mithridates and poison, we would be adequately immunized . . . I cannot honestly prove her right, but I must say that at least she set a standard.

But now Lia is calling again, and I know that since it is Friday there must be fish for dinner, and fish, most of the time, means *maionese*.

I approached the making of *maionese* with trepidation. You had to follow a strict, unchallengeable, unquestioned ritual, or else there were penalties to be paid. I never knew or asked what they might be, in the same way that I never cared to ask what the consequences would be if in church I dipped a dirty

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"We was all setting up against our saddles now, with the small, dry-willow campfire guttering down to nothing in front of us and our stomach full of Colorado blackberries, which is what they call navy beans back where they have enough sense not to eat them, and the night coming in thick and rich as coffee.

"'Are Indians issued regular birth certificates?' Tracy says.

"'Not as a general rule,' Tracker says, staying mild about it. 'Saves keeping track when they get kilt.'

"The sheriff sat up and yanked one of the whiskey bottles out of his saddlebag and says, 'Tracker, got any suggestions how to pass out this medicine?'

"'The sooner gone, the less to quarrel over,' Tracker says.

"'Good idea,' the sheriff says, uncorking. 'It won't stop up your nose, will it?'

"'That ain't been my experience,' Tracker says.

"He toasted the bottle around at each one of us and smiled a peaceful smile and says, 'Bumblebees, sheriff. Bumblebees. And they all know their way home to the hive.' He tilted it up like a bugler playing his music backwards."

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LITTLE, BROWN

hand into the Holy Water fountain.

Getting ready for the *maionese*-making was not too dissimilar from the priest's preparations before he performs Holy Mass. First: The Bowl. It had to be the bowl for *maionese*, a white china one, a half sphere with a flat base. Nothing else would do. Then: The Spoon, a short-handled hardwood spoon, its curvature made by use to conform perfectly to the inside of the *maionese* bowl, and like it, reserved for that use only. Then: The Eggs. They had to be day-fresh and at room temperature, neither warm nor cold to the touch. Then The Lemon: squeezed as thoroughly as possible and its juice filtered through a sieve into a small glass beaker.

Then the rubbing of hands with the squeezed-out lemon. This was not a mandatory step in the ceremony—only an aping on my part, for I had seen my mother and Lia do that before they discarded the rinds ("It keeps the skin clean . . .").

Finally there was The Olive Oil. We had three different qualities in the kitchen: frying oil, cooking oil, and the "pure virgin." The first two were store-bought and kept in nondescript vessels. The third was hand-carried to us by a farmer who insisted he picked the olives himself and swore to the impeccability of the oil's pedigree. This oil was kept in a special crock and used only for salads, fish, and, naturally, *maionese*. I treated this oil religiously, associating its name directly with that of the Virgin Mary. It had to be poured and measured into a copper contraption with a beaky spout. A spilled drop was a sin, even if (I reassured myself) only a venial one. Mortal sin was when your words, thoughts, or deeds provoked the sky to crack open and a lightning bolt to fizzle you to nothingness on the spot.

Once I had assembled all the elements, including salt and pepper, I had to line them up on the kitchen table and pull a chair up close to it. The positioning of the chair was all-important. It had to permit me, once seated, to reach the ingredients with my left hand, and simultaneously leave me with an unobstructed view of the whole kitchen—and of Lia.

The separating of the eggs followed: ever so carefully I would plop the yolk back and forth from one half shell to the other, letting all the white slink into a glass, *all* the white. In a very fresh egg that takes some doing. Just when you think that the white's all gone, you

spy some, still slyly clinging to the yolk. You have to make a gambler's choice: either ignore the remaining white, or go for broke and the pristine yolk and risk losing some of the precious gold along with the hideous white. Lia must have shared my agony at this point, for she always stopped her activity and observed me, holding her breath.

With the yolks separated, the real business is at hand. The bowl has to be nestled in your lap. The nestling is important; human warmth is essential for real *maionese*. Then you begin to stir, setting for yourself a pace that has to be maintained until the end. Changing it or, God forbid, reversing the direction of your stirring will result in a humiliating mess. Once the yolks are smooth, you add the oil. A drop, or if you are daring, two. You stir and let the yolks absorb it at their will; you cannot control or speed up this first alchemy. Each yolk—and I have met many—has its own time, willingness, and temper in this delicate matter of amalgamation. I suspect the same holds true for the oil, but I can't prove it.

When the yolks (or the oil) have decided to combine, the mixture turns slightly paler and thicker. You keep stirring and add another drop of oil, or two, but that might be pushing your luck. Stir, amalgamate, drop of oil, stir. Now you have reached the crucial point in *maionese*-making. Don't let the palpitations of your heart change the stirring pace: this is the moment of truth! For this is when, for arcane reasons nobody will ever explain, the *maionese* can (and oh how many times it did and will) *impazzire*. That is, it goes crazy. You can interpret the terrifying phenomenon euphemistically as "curdling," but the literal translation, "going crazy," is much closer to what the *maionese* actually does. Your smooth, silky delight suddenly becomes diabolically transformed. Its color turns, the monstrous thing is now slimy, then raggedy and wet—it looks as if it wants to slither right up and out of the bowl. And it will, if you can't control the wild tremor in your knees. Do not panic. Do not attempt to beat the thing down with the spoon. Close your eyes, put the bowl down on the table and admit your shame to the world. You could quit there, give up. But you can't. You are in Rome, remember, with Lia looking on, counting on you. Moreover, the black shadow of war is over you, and two egg yolks are two egg yolks, and not to be given up without a fight.

The rescue operation has to be swift. You must at once tumble down five blacked-out flights of stairs, guided only by memory and the dim light of a candle held (against regulations) by the two gossiping old biddies on the second-floor landing. Then across the courtyard, across the dark street, and, after a brief struggle with the blackout curtain and out-coming customers, into the milk store to buy one egg.

You stick your hand into the wire basket, feel for the right egg. You can't afford a wrong egg, another crazy egg. Feel for the warmth. A cold egg is suspicious. A cold egg has been refrigerated. A refrigerated egg is not day-fresh. Cold is bad and warm is good.

You toss a coin to Signor Mario, the milk-store man. He is smirking at you. He knows you made a crazy *maionese*. The whole world knows. He takes the coin, still smirking. He bounces the coin on the marble counter, taking his time, smirking. He bounces the coin again, listening for the telltale sound of a fake. He stares, smiles, and bounces the coin some more.

Is he trying to drive me crazy too? I hate you, sour-milk dealer, son of a cow and a chicken, give me my change. Please. The change, finally, and fast across the street, the courtyard, up the dark stairs, past the two old biddies. They yell after you, "*Coraggio!*" Courage. Two more flights, three steps at a time, across the threshold, through the hall and into the kitchen, to the rescue with one warm egg in your hand. It's almost all right now, you can breathe. But watch your step, don't let over-confidence destroy you. Calm down, Lia is there.

Transfer the crazy substance to a cup, clean the *maionese* bowl, and separate the saving egg ever so carefully. Plop the yolk into the bowl. Sit down, stir the yolk, slowly, and carefully add a spoonful of the crazy to it. Stir. It works, it's amalgamating, it's beautiful. Stir, add, stir, and add. A wonder has come to pass. The *maionese* is sane again. Now you can sing, or just listen to Lia.

In her sweet Venetian accent she sings of the mountains she's left, of the tall blond Alpine trooper who's scaling the highest alp to pick her a flower. The song goes up and down, now a whisper, now a thrill, like the Alpine valleys and peaks. When she reaches the peaks, Lia stops kneading the pasta dough she is making, her arms bearing

down on it, her neck stretched and high. A moment's pause, and sliding in a valley the kneading resumes, her body bending and stretching with the rhythm of the song and the kneading.

You stir, your pace now following Lia's song. Half the oil is gone, time for a pinch of salt, stir, add a few drops of lemon juice, stir. But now it is all automatic, the adding, the stirring, you are safe home. With Lia singing and kneading, the *maionese* goes by itself, the spoon goes around and around, simply taking your arm along.

There must be something atavistic in the male blood that makes it rush, relent, rush with the peaks and valleys, the suspicion of Lia's breasts valleying and peaking, the stretch of her neck, the swaying of her hips. What a wonder it is, seeing flour and water turn into pasta! When Lia is doing it, it's a mir-

acle. Does she know? Stir, stir, a little lemon, stir, a little oil. The song goes on, the peaks and the valleys . . . How simple and rewarding is the making of *maionese*!

At dinner, Papa will ask what we did all day. My sister will have danced as never before, my brother will have swum his fastest mile; and what will I have done? Not much, nothing really. Mama will bring to the table the poached fish, and Lia will follow with the chilled wine and the *maionese*. Mama will serve the fish and Papa will sip the wine and taste the *maionese*. A ritual: he will barely dip his fork and bring a drop to the tip of his tongue. He will savor it, a suggestion of doubt will cross his face, he will take another sip of wine and retaste. Then he will look at me, a secret wink and a smile, and just say "*Buona.*" Good.



Mick Jagger

A FAN'S NOTE

by Mary Pinkham

I'm just back from the Rolling Stones concert tonight, and I want to sit right down and tell you about it before the experience wears off. Well, it was something else. I'd never seen them in person before. The Stones, of course, are the only vintage rock group left; some of them are older than I am, and how much longer can they keep it up? I guess that's why I wanted to see them this time around. History. And, you know, I've always liked their stuff.

Our seats were disappointing, because we were above the six-ton circle of lights and so missed the effects of the

special light show. But in another way the seats were fine for my purposes. I like to see what is really going on behind what is going on, and with the aid of binoculars, we were well placed for that.

We could see the band steal quietly onstage in the initial blackout, led up the stairs by a couple of stagehands with flashlights; and two hours later we saw them run back toward the dressing rooms wringing wet, jackets over their shoulders, laughing, swigging beer, and getting the hell out of there. No encores. Not one. But they really

gave it while they were up there. They didn't stop once. Two hours of value for money. Although I must say I could have done without some of their famous (and expensive) special effects, and that includes not only the confetti-spewing dragon, but the big balloon phallus as well.

About the music. Here I have to say that if what you are after is an appreciation of the Stones's oeuvre, you'd be better off at home with your stereo. I could seldom distinguish the lyrics, and what came through was often little more than the beat. But that you could feel in your bones. And let us not forget the screaming and the shouting and the dancing. Tremendous.

They opened with "Honky Tonk Women," a good number, and kind of eased into the show from there. The energy level picked way up in the middle, after "Wild Horses," a slow song I like. "I have my freedom/But I don't have much time . . ."—I've always thought of it as true testimony about the life of a rock star. When they hit "Brown Sugar" ("How come you dance so good?"), they gathered every erg generated so far and took off from there ("Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whoo!/Just like a, just like a black girl should . . .").

My recollections of the rest of the show grow hazy in spots—partly the bad acoustics, but also because the kids in our row had begun, quite courteously, to offer us the ends of their joints. Wasn't that nice? Old as we were? (Only a year older than Mick Jagger, if you want to look at it that way. Then again, it does take it out of you, not being a millionaire rock star.) The audience looked mostly teen-aged.

What impressed me most about the whole thing was, first, that the Stones are still *there*. But more than that, they're so much the same. I mean, my life has changed and changed thrice over since they first spun into the U.S.A. on the heels of the Beatles eleven years ago. I was a senior in college. They were the big, bad, dirty Stones vs. the enchanting Beatles. Well, the Beatles are all grown up now. Some have turned out okay, some not so well, but they, like me, have kids, hassles, career problems. Another phase of life. The Stones, never so individually well publicized—not even Mick Jagger—seem to have remained as they were.

Revealed to us neck to hip by the end of the show, Jagger's body is the smooth, hairless, ribby torso of a child

of twelve. ("Not a mark on it," said my friend, a doctor, who was studying it—"for tracks"—through the binoculars.) Lean and muscled (what he does out there night after night is *exercise*), but underdeveloped. Keith Richard is still the adolescent rebel, in his moody black leather suit and eggbeater hairdo.

It occurs to me that when I say "the Stones," I, like most people, almost invariably mean only Jagger and Richard. The others don't get much attention. Charles Watts, the drummer with the wonderful face, looks in fact quite different since earlier tours. He has become crazily thin and has shorn his head around a sizable bald spot on top, resembling a fanatically ascetic monk. Bill Wyman, the bass guitarist (with the thinnest legs in rockdom), does, like Mick and Keith, look just the same.

And of course Brian Jones, the angel-faced guitarist, who might have shown the ravages of a decade of hard living, is dead of it instead. His replacement for this tour is Ron Wood, formerly of Faces, who seems to have as his goal the closest possible resemblance to Keith Richard. Wood matters. It is really on him and on Richard that the big, bad image of the Stones depends today. Smiling sardonically at each other as they back up Jagger, they are the ones who look out of reach, out of touch, possibly out of control. The Stones's trademark threat of mayhem and disintegration resides in the two of them.

Richard, the lead guitarist, runs the group on stage. He stands at such an impossible backward tilt—jaw dropped stupidly, eyes staring vacantly—that I wondered if he would make it through the evening. But as the show goes on, he plays three guitars, plugs and unplugs a bewildering array of amp cords and avoids tripping over a serpentarium of cables at his feet, cues the numbers, and sets the beat. He pays attention to no one, and they all watch him. On one of his amps is a quart of Jack Daniel's and a can of Coke, which he and Jagger sip alternately.

Jagger. Yes, he is amazing. Those lips. That rubber face. The energy, the taunts, the naughtiness. But he is not sinister, despite his Hell's Angels—Altamont period and all the earlier alter-egoing with the Devil. No. Naughty is really the word by now. It seems that the evil times have just outstripped him. I felt a real affection for him, imagining that his drive to shock

must have mellowed to a realization that it was the music, the theater in what he did that was more important than the outrage. And so there he still is, doing the same old thing, doing it better than anybody else.

Yet I was struck by how much it seems that he is not the heart of the show. No, wait, that's not right; he *is* the show. It's that he does not seem to be the heart of the *group*, as I had expected. That is Richard, running the music, giving the nod. It's as if Richard were the organ-grinder and Jagger the monkey, prancing and chattering out front, attracting the customers to the serious business behind him.

Mick was wearing pink. The most curious outfit. There were pants with a drawstring top and drawstring (often unstrung) ankles, rather like sweatpants; orange and multicolored striped socks and Pat Boone white bucks. The moment he came on stage I noticed a rent, about three inches long, up high in the outside seam of his trousers. "It's deliberate," said my companion. "Part of the act." "Of course," I said. But kept watching. The rip got bigger as the show went on, climbed higher into the danger area, but stopped quite firmly at flashpoint. Which, given his splits and tumbles around the floor, is perhaps not the way an honest rip would have performed.

By the way, you know the story that he is supposed to stuff himself, filling up his jockstrap with pairs of socks (number depending on mood, I suppose)? Well, as far as I could tell—and what with the binoculars that was a lot—he not only did not do it tonight, but I would bet money he had nothing on underneath at all. Just to set those little rumors at rest.

Anyway, these pink trousers were topped by a wide rhinestone belt, a black leather wrap-around halter top which tied in front (ends dangling along with the trouser drawstrings), and a corrugated pink satin jacket piped in baby blue. Then there was a long silk scarf. A stretch rhinestone bracelet, pushed high over the bicep after the jacket came off, and a large rhinestone (I presume) ring completed Jagger's outfit. His eyes were heavily ringed in black, which made him look uncannily like Melina Mercouri.

The message of this getup, rip and all, was confusing. It wasn't gorgeous, it wasn't tacky, it wasn't sexy, it wasn't daring. It wasn't anything but curious.

Another thing that surprised me about seeing Jagger in person is that he really doesn't dance very well. It's true. He does not *move* well. He is an actor, rather. A mimic. He struts like a scolding housewife, shaking his finger, swivel-wristed (she's telling you to get away from her clean steps). Then he's a rag doll, flopping onto the floor, legs askew, pretending to go to sleep. And then he is up, cat-walking like an amiable whore showing her stuff, doing double takes. (Notice that the images he conjures up are all women.) When he can't think of anything else to do, he jumps little jumps in the air. But somehow it all works. You don't take your eyes off him. Why, I don't know. I can name the flaws, but I can't define the magic.

What he is, really, is a pro. (Can that be *all* it is?) After a dozen years, they have to be a bunch of pros. I realized it most powerfully while paying attention to a little triangular drama that seemed to be developing between Jagger on the one hand and Richard and Wood on the other. They stood smiling at one another and exchanging looks as they played. There's a strong and deliberate androgynous quality about Jagger, which plays off the murky macho of Richard and Wood. Well, Mick kept coming back to sort of shoo Wood off. He began a dance of hiss-kiss come-on at Richard, who started moving him little by little downstage, luring him closer and closer to the edge . . . What now? Has it gone too far tonight? And then, right in step, the second that Jagger hit the downstage mike, he and Keith swung into the next number, with everybody on beat behind them. Pirandello, choreographed.

At the end, as we stomped and clapped, peaked out and happy, it occurred to me that the Stones would do it all over again tomorrow night. And then two nights later in Cleveland, and then Buffalo, Toronto, New York, Philadelphia, and so on to South America many weeks (and millions of dollars) later. Where will I be a few months hence? Doing what I habitually do, too (though without being noticeably richer). I thought of Jagger's rhinestone belt, which he uses as a whip during "Midnight Rambler" as he mock-fucks the floor. Many of the rhinestones fell out tonight and scattered with the blows. Does he use a new belt for each show? Or does it just get less and less sparkly as the tour progresses?

ESCAPING FALSE CATEGORIES

by Richard Todd

I suppose it would be possible actually to dislike Saul Bellow's new book, **HUMBOLDT'S GIFT** (Viking, \$10.00). And I have a hunch that soon somebody will be explaining that it's "deeply flawed." And before that happens I urge you to let yourself enjoy this ebullient novel.

Humboldt's Gift recalls the Saul Bellow who wrote *Herzog* (though plainly a lot has happened to him since then). He's once again a writer who is fervently amused, if not obsessed, by worldly issues—status, success, money, and sex, and self-regard—as they are experienced on the lovely, hypocritical island known as the "American intellectual community." Like *Herzog*, *Humboldt's Gift* is a portrait of a literary man coming apart at the seams and spilling out his stuffings: ideas, ideas, ideas, none of which are wholly foolish, but most of which are gloriously inconsequential and irrelevant to the course of his troubled life.

The story is told in the voice of its hero, Charles Citrine, Pulitzer prizewinner, biographer, historian, playwright, scriptwriter, essayist. Think of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur Miller, Arthur Penn, and you have a mélange of personalities that suggests Citrine's social and cultural rank. Of course one thinks unavoidably, also, of Saul Bellow. Suggestions of autobiography (Citrine, to begin with, is Chicago's leading intellectual figure) enhance the comedy and lend a certain tension to the novel. Bellow will no doubt be accused of preening. But to the extent that it is autobiographical at all, the book's dominant mode is a heady, almost reckless self-parody.

Citrine has a various past, all of it upwardly mobile: son of an immigrant family, a Big-Ten boy with big-city ambitions, he's befriended by the briefly famous poet Von Humboldt Fleisher (whose life recalls that of the late Delmore Schwartz). Fleisher launches Citrine's career as an academic and a writer, and inspires him with manic, untidy social visions. (When Fleisher's own career burns out in madness and obscurity, Citrine guiltily neglects him, but Humboldt's legacy—spiritual, and in the end, actual—continually affects Ci-

trine's life.) When we meet him, Citrine is living high but heading for a fall. He's divorced from a shrew and in love with a woman whom he secretly thinks of as a "floozy" (the exquisite Renata, whose perfection is so complete that one has to look to a slightly outsized knuckle to find a flaw). He's unable to work—stalled on an essay about boredom—and he's about to have his fortune demolished by the divorce courts.

The other thing about Citrine is that he's the figure we Americans are bred to dislike: The Brain, who's really dumber than the rest of us. The smart guy who, as they say in the Army (where they're often right), doesn't know shit from Shinola.

It is a large part of Citrine's charm that he couldn't agree more with this diagnosis of his character. And it is Bellow's primary accomplishment in this book to have created a narrative voice that works beguilingly on several levels. Taken straight, Citrine is a swell talker, full of epigrammatic wisdom and half-wisdom about American life, and aware of his own ineptitude and vanity: he's critical of himself for thinking too much about the white hairs in his nostrils. At the same time he's comically unaware of his larger moral failings.

In a winning scene, the cosmopolitan



Saul Bellow

son Citrine encounters his boyhood sweetheart, Naomi Lutz, whose social station has remained unchanged. She wonders what their life might have been like together:

I was in love with you, but I married a regular kind of Chicago person because I never really knew what you were talking about. . . . I've often asked myself . . . whether you'd make more sense today. Would you talk to me the way . . . you talk to yourself? Did you have an important thought yesterday, for instance?

Citrine, with what he takes to be a warm responsiveness to her question, explains that he thought a great deal about sloth, his own and sloth in general, and there follows the most imaginatively boring disquisition on sloth that you could hope for, laced with self-aggrandizement. At the end, Naomi asks, "Is this really a sample of your mental processes?"

"Yes," I said. . . .

"Oh Christ, Charlie," said Naomi. . . . and reaching over and breathing kindly into my face, she patted my hand. "Of course you've probably become even more peculiar with time. . . ."

Citrine may be endlessly self-contemplating, but he understands a crucial fact about his fellow citizens—"what a tremendous force the desire to be interesting has in the democratic USA." The country is full of people who, justifiably enough, want to grab each other by the shoulders and shake, who want to say: *Listen man, listen kid, listen lady, listen chickadee, listen to my story and you'll learn something.*

Citrine has an admirable appetite for this sort of encounter, and he gets his fill. Much of the action of the novel turns on his relationship with a Chicago thug named Cantabile, who has a wardrobe, office furniture, and a mistress that impress the elegant Citrine. He also has a fine gift for intimidation ("I'm in a position to throw their balls into the Osterizer"), which he uses on the novel's hero. Citrine is subjected to a ritualistic humiliation by the criminal, who begins by demonstrating that he knows how to hit Citrine where he lives, right in his symbol system. Cantabile, or his boys, rough up Citrine's silver Mercedes 280-SL, emblem of his accommodation to the materialistic life. Citrine laments: "My elegant car, my shimmering silver motor tureen which I had had no business to

buy—a person like me, hardly stable enough to drive this treasure—was mutilated. Everything! . . . I felt like swooning."

Cantabile is one of many people who want to say to Citrine: "Don't you understand what you're doing to me? You've written all that stuff. You're in *Who's Who*. But you dumb asshole you don't understand anything." A high point of their association occurs when Cantabile suckers Citrine into being cast as a hit man while Cantabile confronts a would-be defaulter. ("Take a good look at my associate," he says, to his victim, of the hapless, mild-mannered Citrine. ". . . You'll see him again. He'll catch up with you. In a restaurant, in a garage, in a movie, in an elevator.")

Well, one could go on. I see I've made flyleaf notes on dozens of items which don't lend themselves to sequential argument except to suggest the richness of observation and invention in *Humboldt's Gift*. A piece of Chicago slang: "buffaloes," meaning blacks, suggesting, presumably, a wish for their extinction. The scene in which Citrine's Renata steals his shoe as they lunch in the Oak Room of the Plaza. And odd bit characters—Flonzaley the mortician, or the loutish fellow with modish hair who's described as having a "pig-in-wig appearance." Much of the pleasure of this book lies in seeing one of the country's best novelists at work, and in allowing yourself at least the illusion that his energies are carefree and boundless.

Once I met Saul Bellow. This isn't wholly irrelevant. It was some time ago and I remember little that was said, but I do remember the tone of the conversation. Meetings between the famous and the nonfamous don't often go well; it's too easy for everyone to assume roles. But there is a compliment that occasionally can be paid in these circumstances: tentativeness, curiosity, an attitude which says, in effect, that most people are full of surprises and most situations are up for grabs. And it's that attitude that Bellow brought to the small occasion. In the book, there's a line of Citrine's, embedded deeply in farce but intended with sincerity: "If there is one historical assignment for us it is to break with false categories." That's the spirit in which the novel is written.

There are at least a couple of recently published novels that haven't been mentioned in these pages, and ought to be. Thomas Berger's **SNEAKY PEOPLE** (Simon and Schuster, \$8.95) is

a darkly comic tale set in the Middle West of the 1930s. Berger is always a subtle writer, and from behind the bizarre events of this novel there emerges a tenderly conceived story of a boy's trading-in of his innocence.

I'm less enthusiastic than many other readers have been about Judith Rossner's **LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR** (Simon and Schuster, \$7.95), an account of a sexually adventuresome woman's life and violent death. Large claims have been made for it as a statement about the exploitation (and self-exploitation) of women. The claims seem to me overstated—for one thing, the book is too much concerned with men, too little with its heroine's interior life (though I suppose you could say that's just the point). But it asks a lot of right questions, and it's an absorbing read.

And a further PS. It somehow doesn't seem right to remark on these novels without saying that the single most affecting piece of fiction I've read recently was a small story in the June 23 *New Yorker* called "Separating" by John Updike. Updike, of course, has been blamed and praised for his elegant, luminous style; again and again it's been said that he certainly is *clever*, but that cleverness gets in the way of sentiment. Anyone trying to make that argument in the future will have to think twice after reading "Separating," a wrenching account of a man explaining to his children that he and their mother must part. Here self-consciousness falls away, and Updike seems aware of his "craft" only as a horse may be aware of its stride.

LIFE & LETTERS CONTRIBUTORS

G. Franco Romagnoli is co-author with his wife, Margaret, of *The Romagnolis' Table*.

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Richard Todd is an associate editor of *The Atlantic*.

Phoebe Adams regularly contributes short reviews to this column.

POETS IN THIS ISSUE

Felicia Lamport's (page 47) books include *Scrap Irony* and *Cultural Slag*.

William Matthews (page 61) is poet in residence at the University of Colorado and author of *Sleek for the Long Flight*.

Michael Dennis Browne (page 66) has been teaching English at the University of Minnesota.

SHORT REVIEWS: BOOKS

by Phoebe Adams

1776: YEAR OF ILLUSIONS by Thomas Fleming. Norton, \$12.50. Although Mr. Fleming's purpose, when reduced (perhaps unfairly) to its simplest terms, is to demonstrate that for the greater part of the glorious year of our country's birth nobody on either side really knew what he was doing, this history is not mere debunkery. In Mr. Fleming's view, selfless heroism cannot be expected from large numbers of people over long periods of time. The wonder of '76 was not that stupidity, uncertainty, self-interest, and dishonesty existed, but that so much was accomplished in spite of them. The book is fast-moving and clearly written, full of the kind of sharp detail and personal opinion that get lost out of more orthodox histories. It is a stimulating affair. Illustrations.

GEORGE SAND by Curtis Cate. Houghton Mifflin, \$15.00. Mr. Cate has sensibly resisted the temptation to interpret George Sand primarily as a forerunner of the women's rights movement. While she was steadily concerned about women's problems, Sand herself was infinitely more complicated and more interesting than the average citizen of either sex, and created her personal problems on an idiosyncratic and virtually inimitable scale. This is a thorough, careful, well-written biography of an author with a private demon. Illustrations, bibliography, index.

NOBODY MAKES ME CRY by Shelley List. Saturday Review-Dutton, \$7.95. A clever salt and vinegar novel about a group of Long Island ladies, menopausal and discontented, coping with divorce, boredom, alcohol, and men. Everybody talks too much and too eloquently to create any illusion of reality, but the emotions and actions ring true.

THE FIGHT by Norman Mailer. Little, Brown, \$7.95. The author went to Zaire, Africa, to cover the heavyweight title match between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, and as usual, managed to cover a good deal more than the boxing. Much of the book is fascinating—the pre-fight psychological warfare, for instance—and some of it is dubious. But it is one of Mr. Mailer's

charms that he never fears to climb out on a limb.

KIPLING: The Glass, The Shadow and The Fire by Philip Mason. Harper & Row, \$8.95. Mr. Mason sets out to prove that there was much more to Kipling than jingoist drum-banging. He succeeds, which will come as no surprise to Kipling addicts—for whom the work is not intended. This study is designed for readers who have been scared off Kipling by scornful critics, and thereby missed some good reading.

MEN OF MAIZE by Miguel Angel Asturias. Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, \$10.00. Parts of this novel about backwoods Indians in Guatemala are highly impressionistic and so heavily loaded with Mayan myth that it becomes difficult to follow the real action. Other sections are straightforward, highly amusing, rustic comedy; the episode of the two drunks peddling liquor is a classic of its loony kind. These seemingly contradictory elements fuse into a brilliant and moving account of a primitive society struggling to survive against forces only partially understood. Translated by Gerald Martin.

THE POISONED KISS by Joyce Carol Oates. Vanguard, \$7.95. The subtitle is "and other stories from the Portuguese." Ms. Oates reports that an entity named Fernandes invaded her mind and compelled her to write these thoroughly uncharacteristic tales. Fernandes appears to have read a bit of Borges, but the business is otherwise quite unaccountable. The stories, for all their deliberately remote character, are good.

THE MUTINY ON THE GLOBE by Edwin P. Hoyt. Random House, \$7.95. The *Globe* was a whaler out of Martha's Vineyard, with an inexperienced captain and a crew that included one polished and malignant madman. Enough people survived the mutiny, which took place in 1824, to provide quite detailed accounts of the bloody doings. Mr. Hoyt has made good use of this material to create, or recreate, suspense and horror.

COCKPIT by Jerzy Kosinski. Houghton Mifflin, \$8.95. The hero of Mr. Kosinski's new novel is a nameless refugee from some totalitarian regime who has mysteriously acquired vast funds and limitless freedom of motion, which he employs to humiliate and destroy certain arbitrarily chosen victims. As any

sort of comment on society, the book is absurd. As a juvenile fantasy, however, a dream of revenge, of power exercised by the powerless, it raises a chill made stronger by the unanswered question, Who is the dreamer?

MARY CASSATT by Nancy Hale. Doubleday, \$10.00. Cassatt was the well-behaved daughter of a well-bred, well-heeled family. Even in Paris, there were no Bohemian revels for her. She attended ailing parents. She acquired a chateau where she is vividly remembered by the locals as the lady who saved our girls from the button factory. She became testy. She conformed, in fact, to the standard notion of the American spinster, except on one important point: she was a fine professional painter. Ms. Hale, who has an exceptional understanding of painters and their ways, can see the excitement of accomplishment beneath the surface of Cassatt's life, and can make the reader both see and respond to it. She is an ideal biographer for a subject who deserves the best. Illustrations, bibliography, index.

A WORD CHILD by Iris Murdoch. Viking, \$8.95. Ms. Murdoch's hero, a surly, suspicious bachelor, involves himself in erotic entanglements that must be read to be believed. That is the author's impressive accomplishment; the whole mad mix-up is believable. So are the odd, cranky people, their dingy London surroundings, and their endless, needling prattle. Skillful, elegant, witty—this is a superior novel.

THE HATCHET MAN by Mel Arrighi. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$6.95. A muckraking reporter, somewhat down at the heel, is hired to apply his talents to an exasperatingly virtuous young politician. He does, and by always assuming the worst, plants a petard that hoists the good guys. This would be a fine, sardonic thriller if the author had managed to cover one monumental improbability; as it stands, the book is entertainment.

Excerpts from the following books recently appeared in *The Atlantic*:

THE GREAT RAILWAY BAZAAR by Paul Theroux. Houghton Mifflin, \$10.00.

THE UNEXPURGATED CODE by J. P. Donleavy. Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, \$8.95.

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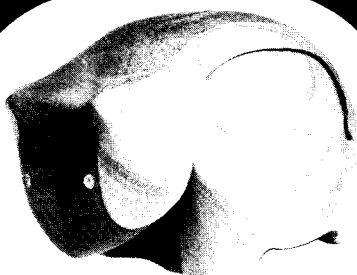
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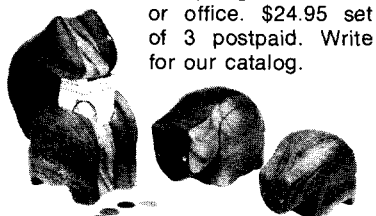
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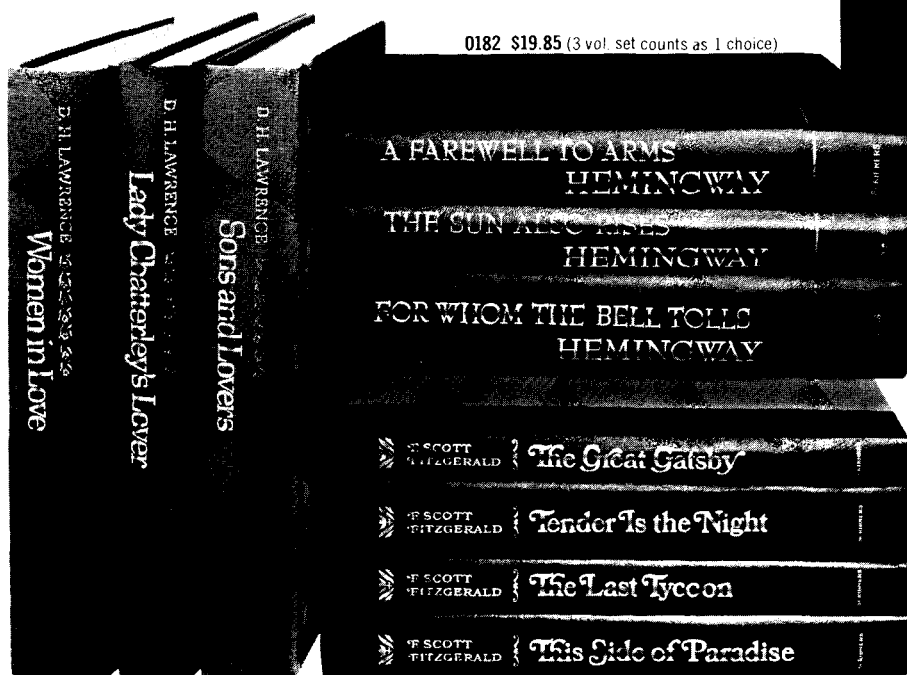
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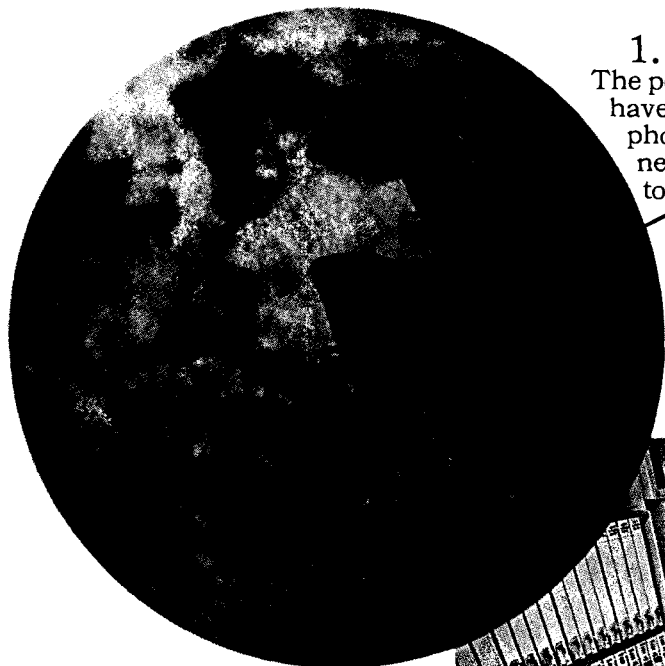
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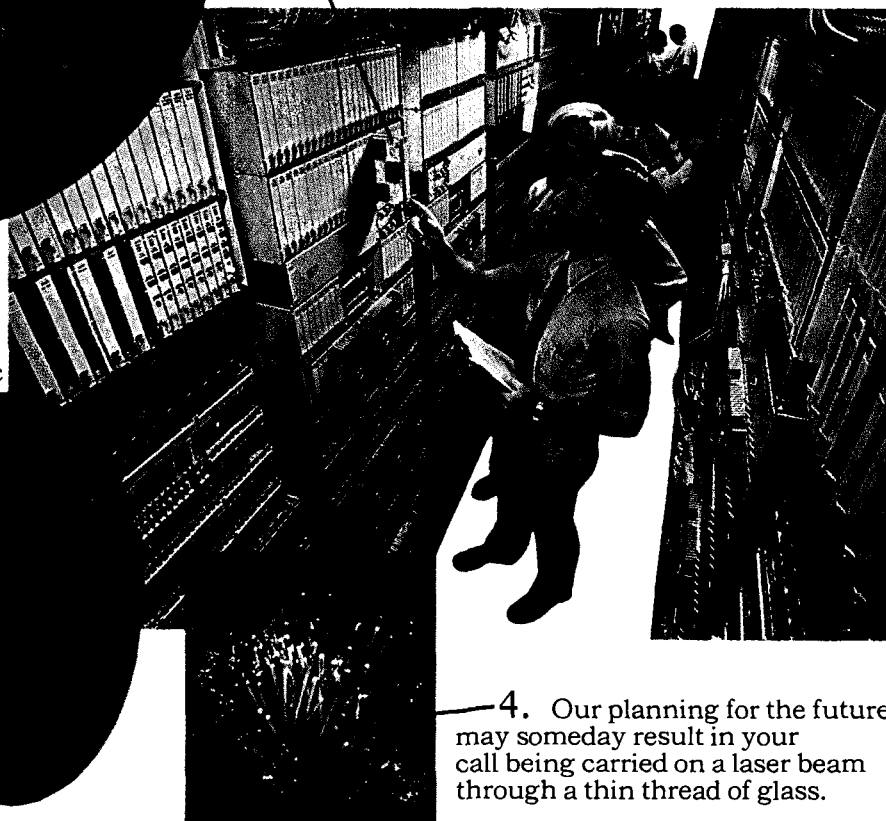
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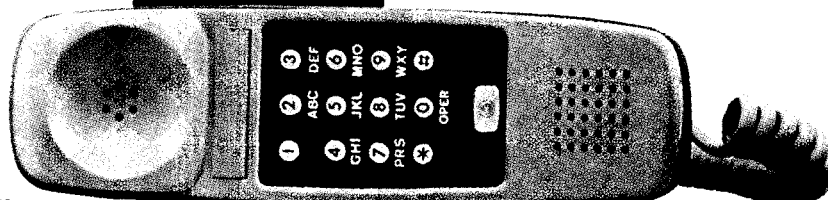
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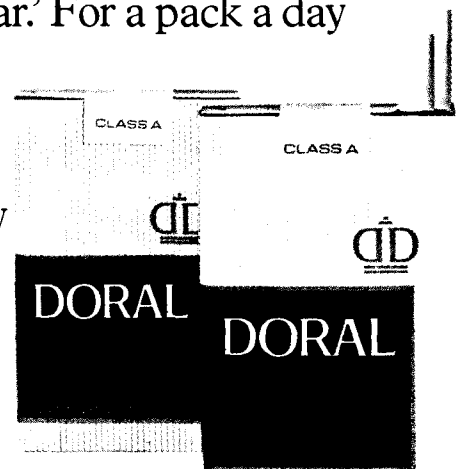
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